

# Encounter Church Annual Report 2022 - 2023



# Annual Ministry Reports

## June 25, 2023

Looking back has always had some spiritual value. I would argue that looking back is a necessary spiritual discipline to effectively walk by faith in the present.

Consider the instructions given to the people of Israel as they crossed the Jordan River in anticipation of taking possession of the land that had been promised to their forefathers:

*1 When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, 2 "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, 3 and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight." (Joshua 4:1-3)*

What was the significance of the rocks? And what purpose did they serve? God answers that question by stating...

*7 "These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever." (Joshua 4:7)*

If you visit Washington D.C. you will see memorials and monuments. They exist to remind our country of important moments, individuals who made a contribution to the formation of our country, or of things we have endured together (such as the Vietnam Memorial).

The twelve stones were to remind Israel of what they had endured together in their flight from Egypt, their forty year struggle in the desert, and the insurmountable task in front of them to take possession of a land that had been promised to their forefathers. Each stone represented one of the twelve tribes of Israel. They were to symbolize a pledge from God, that He who took them out of slavery, providing food and water for survival in the desert, would be the one who gave them victory as they entered the "Promise Land." It was to be a memorial that the God who stopped the waters of the Jordan so that they could cross the river would be the God who sustained them as they lived in the land God was giving them.

The annual report that you are about to read is an invitation to look back, to remember, and to celebrate the presence of God and his activity in our midst. And, to look ahead with anticipation, for what God will do in us, and through us in the days in front of us.

Each ministry lead is taking you on a journey back into significant moments that occurred in 2022-2023 as well as sharing a vision of what they are anticipating as we together walk through 2023-2024.

As pastors, we invite you to see the more global picture of how God has been at work in our church this past year.

First, we celebrate how God continues to grow our heart for global missions. This year, we sent a team back to Mexico for the first time since COVID disrupted our lives and ministry. The fruit of that trip is Elijah Basquez being called to spend the next 12 months serving in Caravan Ministries in Tijuana, Mexico. The resumption of an annual trip to Mexico is the strongest tool we have in cultivating a heart for missions in the lives of young people. For that we give thanks to God!

Second, COVID not only affected our missional engagement globally, but it also affected our participation levels among our ministry teams. As we have moved past the great concerns we all had about the threat of COVID to public health, we have seen our ministry teams grow with new people participating in

meaningful ministry together. Service to Christ is one of the four pillars of our spiritual formation (these four pillars include: worship, community, growth, and service). It is through service to Christ that we glorify God (Matthew 5:16).

Lastly, we recognize that there is a spiritual enemy that wants to destroy unity, distract our determination, and deepen the despair of vulnerable members of our church. As pastors, we are vigilant, and prayerful. We call upon the name of our God to both lead us and protect us.

In spite of these very real concerns, as pastors, we are focused upon the mission God has for our church (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8). How do we participate with God in advancing His Kingdom? We are fiercely committed to the cause of Christ.

We recognize the troubling issues of our day, here in America. We are resolved to stand firm when necessary, while also courageously and strategically advancing the truth of God at every opportunity.

Last year, hosting the Awana program for children afforded one avenue through which to advance the truth of God. This year, we are determined to maximize the preschool by filling every classroom with children from our community.

Last year, we moved the Bridge to Hope Ministry to a weekly breakfast at Encounter; we saw a second individual move off the streets, commit to the Lord's transformation in his life, and now serves many of the same people he once lived among. This year we believe in faith that God is going to add to the number who offer a surrendered life to Christ while we witness God's miraculous transforming power.

Last year, we went to Laos. This year, we are bringing Laos to us through language classes that are being offered twice a week.

Last year, Keys (our ministry to young adults) relocated to a home where more intimate fellowship and discipleship could take place. This year, Keys is hitting the pavement on Thursdays for Evangelism Nights.

Last year, we enjoyed a consistent flow of visitors who experienced our worship and participated in our time of testimonies, and listened to our preaching. This year, we have established an on-boarding process called Journey designed to integrate new members in our church.

In the next year, we are inviting you to give greater priority to serving Christ. Find an area of ministry where you can give your time and your talents to serving Christ while serving others. We believe God is mobilizing us. God can do what He is going to do without us, but he desires to use you and I to accomplish it. Let's go!

Pastor John Stone  
Pastor Joe Walters

## AWANA

Sandra Meyers

Natomas Awana comes to Encounter Church – 2022-2023

It was an exciting year launching Natomas Awana at Encounter Church for the first time. Natomas Awana has a long history in the community, but this was the first year at Encounter. Our goal for the year was to help the kids grow in their knowledge of the Lord and also to disciple our leaders and equip them to mentor the children.



We welcomed back a few leaders, but most of the volunteer positions were filled with Encounter members who served either for the first time in new roles or the first time ever. It really takes a village!

**Returning volunteers included:** Breanna Lutolf, T&T Director; Jeremiah Dunlap, Sparks Director; T&T leaders Laura Dominguez and Brad Meyers; and Student Leaders Daphne Daniel, Avianna

Dunlap, Jamin Dunlap, Samaria Dunlap, April Lutolf, & Emily Millen.

**New Awana leaders included:** Sandra Meyers as Club Director; Neviah Carias as Cubbies Director; and Courtnee Rosepiler as Games Director. New Cubbies leaders were Peggy Chapman, Farida Christensen, Olga Kurilenko, Relena Ogawa, Laura Stone, Sarah Yun. New Sparks leaders were Lizeth Breaux, Darlene Campa, Julius Henderson, Tracy Martin, Maliah Pautin, Tammie Pautin, Choy Phongmany, Pam Porter, Penny Saiyarath. New T&T leaders were Angeniece Garifullin, Norman Hanscome, Brandon Holland. Other volunteers included Brenda Harding, Special Events; Ivan Kurilenko, Games Helper; Kristen & Ashley Pyar, Awana Store.



Our motto for the year was “Be Flexible!” We don’t have as much space at Encounter as we are used to, so we had to be flexible with our set up, especially for game time and small group time. I thank God for the willingness of all our volunteers to flex and adjust throughout the year to meet the needs of the 60+ preschool and elementary-aged participants.



We also wanted our Natomas Awana to reflect the international nature of the program and support Encounter’s missionary focus. To do this, we held three fundraisers during the year to raise funds for the Awana African Schools Project, which takes Jesus into public schools in several African countries.

Our Hot Dog/Nacho and Movie Night fundraisers netted \$1,300, which will cover the cost to embed Awana into two public schools in Zimbabwe. We are looking forward to what God has for Awana in the 2023-2024 school year.

**Bridge to Hope**  
**Eric Christensen**

*“Bridge to Hope” continues to be exactly that for many of the displaced and unhoused children of God residing in our community.*

Most of the camps & unhoused population around us in previous years were located on the RR & canal levies, concentrated especially near the Main Ave RR overpass bridge, where we used to serve them on Sat AM.



Over the last couple of years and even more since our last report, RR Marshals, Sac PD and various authorities have pushed out most of those residing in those areas, so instead being concentrated at/or near Main Ave, most are scattered around in much smaller pockets & camps, often out of sight to avoid being forcibly removed by public & private authorities. Serving these guests here at our church has allowed us to continue this vital ministry in a manner that has changed with the environment since we haven't yet invested in a food truck... Grin & wink....

Our amazing volunteers gather every Saturday morning, 52 weeks per year, at 8:30 AM to pray, prepare and serve a warm breakfast meal with hot coffee. Each week of the month has a different Team & lead(s) that organize their week, prepare and present a gospel message, various testimonies & messages of God's saving grace for the broken. AKA, all of us..... This weekly message is, for most of our guests, their only taste of God's word they will hear. Many haven't ever stepped foot in a church until they come to be served at Encounter. One Saturday per month, Mark Liddell and his team bring mobile showers for our guests and we usually have a volunteer those weeks to cut hair for any guests desiring.

*More about our volunteer saints...*

The list of weekly team leads includes: Will Gaines, Joe Januszak, John Gomez, Bousay Onesyda, Julius Henderson, Jeremiah Dunlap, Penny Saiyarath, Jared Stone, & Elly Nsuangani. Among others, Ange Garifullin and Anthony Alexander have been nearly every week servants along with Norm Hanscome. Erin Hadd has created systems and admin organization that benefit the ministry beyond words. Most of our volunteers will attest that the small sacrificial service we provide benefits us as much or more as it does our guests....

A couple of our BTH guests turned volunteers include Scott and Edward. With both Scott and Edward tirelessly sharing their testimony they continue to show their previous peer set 1<sup>st</sup> hand witness of God's saving grace, being clean of drugs & alcohol and continually pouring generously back to their friends. What an amazing testimony of truth, light & love and it sometimes includes words... Scott is also always ready to share his testimony, The Lord's word in a message, and Edward is leading the way as a weekly shuttle driver from the dark to the light. Highlighting that we are transporting many of the guests to & from BTH on Saturday mornings.



We would like to increase our schedule of this transportation from the camps to also include pick up from some of the institutionalized like Promise House, Sac Recovery, River City Recovery,

etc... Also expanding the events we are bringing these guests to attend beyond BTH, to also include Sunday church service, monthly gathering of Encounter's men's & women's ministry, AA meetings, NA meetings, Celebrate Recovery, etc.

Looking to the future, our church recently received a vehicle to help transport our friends to and from our breakfasts and weekly church services. If you would like to be a part of this ministry, please reach out to myself or someone on the team.

Bridge to Hope is a high impact ministry for the unreached, often intentionally invisible, children of the ONE TRUE GOD. Thank YOU for making it all possible.

*Support Team Leads: Will Gaines, Joe Januszak, John Gomez, Bouasy Onesyda, Julius Henderson, Jeremiah Dunlap, John Stone, & Penny Saiyarath*

*Administration: Erin Hadd, Ange Garifullin, James Ho, Ashley Ho, Claudia Videche, Pam Porter, Ed Perez, & Curtis Chapman*

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## **Children's Church Shannon Speaks**



This has been a year of transition. Under Kerrie's leadership, Children's Church was a mature program that supported our kids and their growing faith. My hope is to continue to develop our program and identify new ways to introduce our students to God and his Word. With that goal in mind, we have been introducing a variety of new ideas, working with our incredible teacher volunteers to see what will work with the existing program. One of our more exciting new activities is Bible familiarization. We begin by challenging our second and third graders to memorize the books of the Bible in order. This

prepares them to challenge each other at sword drills in fourth and fifth grade, racing to look up Scripture references provided by their teachers. By teaching them the structure of the Bible and getting them into it on a weekly basis, we're helping them to be comfortable and familiar with God's Word. To encourage them in these challenges, the teachers now have a prize box for each classroom.

Our children are also being challenged in other ways. The ministry provides each class a monthly verse (with a prize box opportunity for memorization) and are sending home parent handouts so that families can reinforce the lessons learned in class. Several leaders from Children's ministry and FLIPT are also leading a Bible in a Year challenge for students who want to spend more time in Scripture but need guidance and resources to do it. The Challenge includes podcasts, video resources, and weekly meetings before church. This summer we plan to do a mini series on apologetics, as well as holding some special events like a Water Day.



We are also sending birthday cards to our students, signed by their teachers. Building lasting relationships with caring adults is key to retaining students into adulthood, as their faith is challenged by the world around them. Speaking of our teachers, the ministry has been actively recruiting new volunteers to ensure that we have two leaders in every class, protecting both children and the volunteers themselves. Check-in has also seen new helpers come on board. In order to remain compliant with changes in California law, our volunteers have undergone background checks and mandated reporter

training. We have also met with the volunteers, old and new, to work on new ideas, ensure consistency between teachers, and provide support and encouragement where needed. God has blessed this ministry with a talented group of adults who love kids!

*Support team: Joe & Liz Janusak, Peggy Chapman, & all the entire team of teachers and helpers*



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## Finance

### Brian Lutolf, Treasurer

We are grateful to God for his provision and guidance in Encounter's financial situation and growth in the last fiscal year. Your generous giving and partnership have helped Encounter to spread the Gospel to our local community and abroad, even to the remotest parts of the world! As you read through the ministry reports and see how God is working among his people, please know that your financial contributions are vital for this mission. Additionally, we have saved enough reserves for capital equipment replacements and three months of operating expenses for both Encounter & Learning Pointe schools.



I would like to express my gratitude to the Finance team, headed by Brandon Young, for their diligent management of the church's financial matters. This year, Liz Janusak has stepped down after many years of loyal service; we are grateful that Breanna Lutolf has generously agreed to fill Liz's position. Moreover, Michael D'Alessandro has come on board and will be taking over for Peggy Chapman. We will miss both Peggy and Liz but are happy to welcome Breanna & Michael to the team.

We continue to have the vision to expand our Christian education beyond preschool and into primary education; however, to achieve this vision, we need to increase Learning Pointe Preschool enrollment in order to financially support the expansion of additional grades. Please join us in praying that we can hire teachers to support the increased enrollment.

*Support Team: Elizabeth Januszak, Peggy Chapman, Michael D'Alessandro, Brian & Breanna Lutolf, Vanessa Silva, & Brandon Young*

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## FLIPT Youth Ministry

### Brian & Kelsey Jang

Last year we finished out our summer in Tanzanite Park trying to meet new students and share the good news of the gospel to anyone who would listen. Our male leaders were able to meet students playing basketball and share Christ's love with them and we continue to pray that the seeds planted will continue to be watered and grown. We then headed up to the mountains with 30 students to Summer camp at Camp Alta. Our first year at this campsite and we were and are still in love. And yes, we had a blast and the games and fireside fellowship were awesome but more importantly, while there, we witnessed a young girl set free from demonic holds, heard angels singing praises in the middle of the night, and participated in a corporate worship session where the Spirit of the Lord was so thick there was not a single dry eye and most knees were bowed to the one and only KING JESUS!



We then kicked off our new school year with a spin on our usual Burger Bonanza and instead did a "Nacho Average FLIPT Night" with an incredible turnout, nachos coming out our ears, and an obstacle course jump house that'll go down in the books as one of our favorite games. We knew it was the start

to an incredible year. We had fun welcoming in the younger Junior High Students and have been so thankful to watch the relationships that are being formed between our Junior high students and some of the young adults in our church. These leaders have stepped up to play an important and consistent role



in the lives of our teens. Thank you Woodkimley and Sarah Fillacier, for jumping right back into the lives of the 6th and 7th grade teens. You guys didn't miss a beat after graduating out Seniors last year and were excited to continue serving our students as leaders and our Game Gurus! We were also able to grow our team with Aaron Gutierrez, Joseph Moore, Jared Stone, John Gomez, and Courtnee Rosepiller. Jared and John also became permanent fixtures on our teaching staff, getting to hear them speak about the Bible and teach God's word has been an incredible blessing to all our students and staff

alike. Our teaching staff covered some pretty heavy topics this year and we were also able to bring back FYI night where students get to ask the leaders questions and they get their answer from God's word. This FYI night, and the students' questions, only solidified the need we had to really sit down and talk about Sexuality and the Bible. We ended up doing a six week course on Sexuality and what the Bible has to say. This series was illuminating and poignant.

We have now completed one full year of meeting at an earlier time so we can fellowship with students over dinner. Thanks to Brandon and Lauren Young, their coordination skills, and the generosity of our church in their willingness to put food in the bellies of hungry teens we have been feeding youth across Natomas consistently every Wednesday night. Three huge players in our group that God has called out and onward are Sarah and Rohan Salhotra and Elijah Basquez. Sarah Salhotra was leading our Senior girls before she was called away but thankfully God provided and allowed Sarah Yun to take her place to disciple and pray for the Senior girls God entrusted to our Flipt ministry. Elijah Basquez was a steadfast rock when it came to promoting Flipt online, creating slides for Flipt as well as manning the back soundboard. He will be sorely missed however his commitment to serve with Caravan has already created an excitement in our students for the Mexico Mission trip so they can see him in action, south of the border. In November 2022, we sent seven students down on the Mexico trip but are hoping to double that this upcoming year. We are also thankful to have participated in the World Vision "30 Hour Famine" where 40 people from our group decided to forgo food for 30 hours while learning about malnutrition and injustice. We are excited to report that our group raised over \$4000 to go to the World's most needy! This year we said goodbye to 4 incredible Senior students who all understand the importance of Christ in their life, and are excited to stay plugged in with our Keys ministry and find where they can best serve the church.

Currently our ministry is celebrating faithful Flipt Leaders who continue to stay engaged with our students despite schedules and the business of life. Reyna, though navigating a packed schedule still found the time to meet with her girls outside of Flipt's Wednesday night. Also we are thankful for Reyna and Courtnee's marriages, not only because they were once Flipt students and so of course we are over the moon God blessed both of them with God fearing husbands, but also because those husbands are now being roped into serving on Flipt staff!!!



This past year we were able to serve the Crossing Church, Casa de Oracion, and one other church whose name I cannot nail down at the moment as their youth group for their students when they were



either in between youth pastors or just did not have the capability of housing a youth ministry at the time. Partnering with these churches has been a blessing and we hope to remain a steadfast place for students from all churches to come and hear biblical truths. This year has been a blessing and it's strange to think that a year has come and gone so quickly but here we are. All glory to God as we press on with the most incredible volunteer base and even some new volunteers this year!

As we look forward, we would love to add a tutoring component to Flipt Wednesday nights, a place where students could come from 3 p.m. - 6 p.m. on a Wednesday to have a quiet place to study along with tutors to help answer what questions they might have. We are also looking to grow our students in their ability to lead worship and glorify God musically and are looking to start a prayer team within Flipt that would walk campuses and pray for the schools. Finally, we are trying to find ways in which we can get into the schools physically to bring the presence of God; sport coaches, chaplains, speaking at Christian clubs, etc. If you are reading this, and any of the aforementioned goals stick out to you, text Kelsey (916)801-5357!



**Please pray for Summer Camp!** We so look forward to see what God reveals to our students as they commit to a weekend away from the noise and the norm. Ask God to convict our hearts and lead us to repentance. Ask Him to continue igniting a passion deep within our hearts to see youth come to know the one and only true God! Also pray against distractions for our staff and our leaders, there is so much to be done, so many important conversations to be had and the enemy is scheming for our time and so we ask that you, our church, pray boldly against attacks and distractions from the Kingdom work to which we have all been called.

*Support Team: Courtnee Rosepiller 6th and 7th gr. girls, Sarah Filacier 8th gr. girls, Reyna Stoelting 9th gr. Girls, Lauren Young & Ange Garifullin 10/11th gr. girls, Kelsey Jang 12th gr. girls, Kimley Filacier / Aaron Gutierrez 8th gr. guys, Jared Stone 9th/10th gr. guys, Brandon Young 11th gr. guys, DJ Carias 12gth gr. guys*

*Teaching Team: Brian & Kelsey Jang, Joe Walters, John Gomez, Jared Stone, Curtis Chapman, Nikolas Chapman*

*Childcare Team - Peggy Chapman, Mckenzie & Michael D'Alessandro, Ange Garifulin, Maia Gomez, Relena Ogawa, Tammie & Maliah Pautin, Tiffany Ruvalcaba, & Joshua Speaks*

## Keys

### Nemo Chapman / Joe Walters

Keys is a ministry dedicated to disciple young adults in their spiritual growth. Our primary goal is to inspire young adults with a deep sense of love, guiding them towards a profound understanding and unwavering faith in Christ. We wholeheartedly encourage them to joyfully embrace a life devoted to God, pursuing excellence in all aspects and glorifying Him through their actions.



It has become clear how much of a need young adults have for this type of bridge ministry. We are excited about the enthusiasm and passion that God has put on their hearts. God has blessed us with:

- 15-25 members consistently attend each week.
- Members are inviting friends to come and hear scripture.
- Keys has introduced Evangelism Nights, a weekly gathering held on Thursdays, with the purpose of reaching out to the community in Midtown and sharing the transformative message of the

gospel. Our primary focus during these events is to engage and connect with young adults, inviting them to join us on a journey of faith and spiritual growth.

- Weekly study sessions have been dedicated to exploring the realms of evangelism and apologetics. These in-depth studies provide members with valuable insights and practical tools to effectively communicate their faith and defend it intellectually and in a loving manner. By focusing on evangelism and apologetics, we aim to equip individuals with the knowledge and confidence to engage in meaningful conversations and articulate the gospel message with clarity and conviction.



We will continue to focus on apologetics and honing our abilities to defend our faith. Through this ongoing focus, we aim to effectively engage with others, offering them a compelling and well-supported presentation of the gospel message.

As we look forward, our goal is to reach as many young adults as God wills and to teach them a clear biblical worldview. This is a small remnant of faithful young Christians in a big world of secularism. They are being equipped to enter into that world with the truth of the Gospel and the love of Christ.

Prayer requests:

- Please pray that we lead this ministry well.
- Please pray for unity in the body.
- Please pray that as each of these young adults navigates the world; of education, careers, relationships and marriages, that they do it wisely within the will of God.

*Support Team: Josie Chapman, Sue Walters & Max Matthews*

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### **Learning Pointe Preschool** **Vanessa Silva, Director**

It's hard to believe, but Learning Pointe just ended our 12th school year. We've enjoyed being able to help shape the hearts and minds of 48 amazing children. Learning Pointe will celebrate its 13th year this upcoming August. It is a true pleasure to be able to serve the families here of Natomas. We are so thankful for our amazing staff who have a heart for teaching and a passion for working with young children. They show up each day ready to serve and give it their all—they are truly the hands and feet of Jesus. This year we welcomed Ms. Lindsay and Ms. Neviah to our team of teachers.



This year new cabinets were installed in the existing classrooms to match the new classrooms. Even the front office was remodeled with new countertops. Thank you to Brian Lutoff and those that volunteered to help install the new cabinets. Learning Pointe has been able to bless our teachers with two yearly bonuses. Each week the conference room is converted into a gymnastic room. It has been



so much fun to offer gymnastics as an enrichment program at Learning Pointe. The Grace Room which is the new infant/toddler class has grown immensely in the past



year. God blessed us with the perfect teachers who have a genuine heart for infant/toddlers that we couldn't be more thankful for.

Looking to the future, Learning Pointe is losing 3 amazing teachers who have served Learning Pointe for the past several years. Although we are sad for them to leave, we are excited for what God has in store for each of their futures. We hope to hire a full staff next year to not only fill in the open spots but also to open all the classrooms to serve more children. We desire to continue to not only prepare our students academically but to also pour into them spiritually. It's very rewarding when we hear

the children talk about Jesus and demonstrate His love to their peers.

Please pray for:

- Additional staff who love the Lord and love children.
- To fill up the new classrooms with students to reach capacity.
- God to prepare our hearts and minds to serve the new families entering LP this fall.
- The 8 students who will enter Kinder/TK elsewhere in the fall, that they can continue to be a light to others and as they continue to grow.

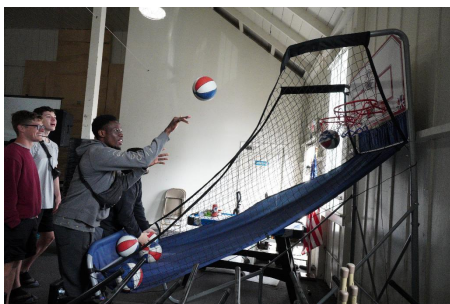
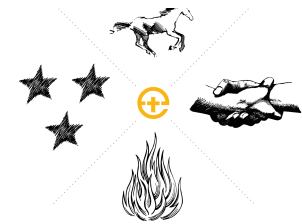


*Support Team: Peggy Chapman and John Stone*

*Teachers: Dulce Jimenez, Raj Heaton, Daisie Beltitis, Neviah Dunlap, Taylor Figuera, Kerrie Cabral, Tracey Chan, Lindsay Foust and Toni Alfaro*

**Men's Ministry**  
**Curtis Chapman**

As I reflect back over these last 12 months, three words pop up instantly. Grateful, Encouraged and Blessed. First, why am I overwhelmed with gratitude? I get excited about a lot of things, that's for sure but one of the things that brings me the most joy is when I see God's people live out, learn and obey the scriptures. I read it one day then see it lived out in our church body shortly after. I think I could write a book full of chapters highlighting men transformed by God's love and truth.



As we continue to work for the Kingdom let us not grow weary in doing good. I am fueled by men who choose to live a life of obedience. This begins with men taking ownership of their faith and choosing to live lives more transformed rather than conformed to the patterns of this world. Many years ago at a men's retreat several of us heard Pastor Sherwood share, "It really helps when men are handling their own business so that those in other positions can handle theirs." This resonates with me as we each go into battle, not against flesh and blood but against the rulers, the principalities... that we can each "handle

our business." We can link arms together and serve the King of Kings.

Lastly, I know we are blessed as we witness God's faithfulness to the men's ministry. To see men come in and get snatched up so fast into a bible study fellowship and or begin to serve is a testament to how Encounter is a modern day Acts community. The kind of growth and stepping in and stepping out in a western church context can take years. We see that happen in months! "Praise God: and "Hallelujah!" We are seeing how God blesses us with fearless warriors who continue to be stretched as they pursue Christ.

Our annual Men's Retreat in April was a much needed time to reflect, renew and recharge. We learned of the mercies of God and allowed that unmerited Grace to propel us into action. We all fight against this world that creates apathy in us. The retreat was a much needed time together as we look to be transformed by the renewing of our minds as opposed to being conformed by the patterns of this world. So therein lies this year's focus. Let God's loving kindness lead us to repentance as we tear down the idols that stand in the way of God's great love for us. As we continue to live this out daily we will continue to see greatness as more men are being clothed in Christ. Obviously, God gets all the Glory. As Encounter men become more zealous for God on the battlefield here are some ways you can pray for us:



### **Please Pray**

1. That men can identify where they have been conformed to the patterns of this world and repent and offer their bodies as living sacrifices which is our spiritual act of worship.  
*Read Romans 12:1-2*
2. That every man would find one person to disciple and put that into action before the year ends.  
*Read Matthew 28*
3. That men would continue to grow in their time together as they build lives of godly character.
4. That every man would pray and look for a ministry to serve and use their gifts in.

*Support Team: John Caampued, Eric Christensen, Xay Phongmany, John Stone, & Joe Walters*

### **Missions**

#### **Brian Lutolf**

Encounter is a community of believers committed to serving God and His people locally and globally. We have witnessed God's work through our church and its ministries this year, especially in Missions. We have strengthened our bonds with our missionaries and supported them as some of them returned to their mission field after several years.



We were delighted to resume our yearly Mexico missions trip this year after the pandemic had put it on hold. We worked with La Roca and Caravan Ministries to help the local people and learn about cross-cultural ministry. DJ, Neviah, Rohan & Sarah led us on this trip and helped us navigate this experience. This trip was a meaningful chance for our youth to gain a new perspective and to serve God in a foreign country. Some of our young adults felt inspired to pursue ways to serve God full-time after returning from the trip. One of them was Elijah Basquez, now an intern at Caravan Ministers in Mexico! He will be spending the next year learning and teaching those that visit Caravan about Missions. What a shining way to help reveal God's love for his people.



There are 3 billion people in the world who have no access to the Gospel. They are known as the unreached; they live without knowing Jesus and his love. They need your prayers. Pray that God will send more workers to share the good news with them, pray that he will protect and guide those already serving among them, and help them remain faithful and strong until the end.

*Support Team: Samantha Bounma, The Caria's, The Chapman's, Mckenzie D'Alessandro, The Lutolfs, and The Meyer's*

## Laos Team

### Lay Vongnangam, Ministry Lead

First and foremost we want to give thanks to our God. And secondly, we want to say thank you to Encounter Church and our Lao Ministry Team. Here are some of the highlights that we are very thankful for. In April we took a small team to visit our brothers and sisters in Laos. Some of the highlights:

- Built strong relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ in Laos at the retreat.
- Heard many testimonies of how God transformed their lives.
- Brothers and sisters are passionate about sharing the gospel.
- People in many provinces are being moved by the Holy Spirit.
- Many lives are being saved.
- Visited established operations having an impact for Christ on the community by giving hope to those who are lost and broken.



Please pray with us that God continues to move in the country of Laos and Thailand. Pray that many miracles happen each and every day throughout the country and that the people of Laos and their government would be on their knees with their hands lifted up high to worship and praise God. Praise our God, our Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior! Amen! And Amen!

For both Laine and I, this year's ministry was special. We were to spend extra time in both Laos and Thailand. We had the opportunity to share the good news of Christ with our friends and relatives including our cousin Narong and his wife Tham. It was their first time hearing about Jesus. Tham was so intrigued, it kept her up all night. Early in the morning, Laine was there to pray with her; definitely not a coincidence.

And then there's our brother and sister in Christ, Lavie and his wife Boonsue. We were blessed to spend some special time with them. We were able to mentor them and love on them as well. We were very super excited to be there and be able to hold their 1 year old baby, named Bunny. Lavie and Boonsue almost went through the abortion process due to the lack of finances. But God has a better plan, a beautiful plan for them. Bunny is so adorable, both Laine and I were able to hold her and we were able to reminisce on how all things work in and according to God's will.

We are excited about the future and our relationships with our friends and family in Laos. We prayerfully look forward to how we can be part of it. Thank you Jesus, Amen!!!

*Support team: Pastor Elilam Nosaphangthong, John Stone, Joe Walters, Brian Lutolf, Laine Vongnangam*

## Missions: Uganda Updates

### Brad Meyers

I have been asked to oversee the Uganda ministry from "here on out," so I will happily do so! Encounter is currently sponsoring 36 kids in the orphanage and we continue to serve the widows and elderly. Uganda will be 1 of 3 main areas of focus throughout the year and updates/presentations will be made quarterly. There has been a lot happening and we have numerous goals that we would like to



accomplish in the next year. One of those goals will be a mission trip to Africa in July 2024! (more on that in a bit!)

Pastor Lutuu has been serving faithfully, every single day. Even when things don't go as planned (transportation), Lutuu always goes the "extra mile! His commitment to God and others is awesome!

We have been meeting quarterly with all of the sponsored children in a zoom meeting. Samantha Bounma has been super amazing at coordinating all of the sponsors and the children so we can all meet face to face. It's a lot of work, but I know all the sponsors and children really enjoy our time of prayer and just getting to know and love the kids that live so very far away. One of Encounter's church members has a classroom of 1st graders that just love Pastor Lutuu and all of the children. They have been raising funds to help with basic needs, such as food, transportation, or whatever else they may need. These amazing little children have raised a lot of funds and give with joy. It's really awesome to see! Encounter has also purchased soccer uniforms for all of the kids and they were just so very thankful!



Have you ever wanted to go to Africa? Well, you can! Encounter is planning a mission trip to Uganda, Africa in July 2024. Yes, it is a year away, but it will be here soon. If you are interested in going, reach out to one of the mission team members and we can help get you there! There are some things that we would like to accomplish while we are there. We would like to help Pastor Lutuu help his community to become more self-sufficient and explore opportunities on starting a small business to help further God's kingdom. We would also love to host a community outreach, a program dedicated for the children and a special day for the widows and elderly. We are seeing God do amazing things in Uganda and I would encourage you to pray and consider how God will use you in this community. God is using Encounter Church to do powerful things in Africa and if you would like to be a part of it, just ask a member of the missions team and we can help you get going in the right direction! Please pray for Lutuu, Rachel and all of the children in the orphanage, They are definitely praying for us!

*Support Team: Missions Team*

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### **Nursery Ministry** **Marylyn DelCastillo**

This has been a wonderful year. The Nursery and Pre-K ministry has grown in many ways. God has been so awesome providing everything we need. Our Volunteer team is made up of over 40 men, women, and teenagers who pour into our littlest members every Sunday. We have also been growing behind the scenes focusing on teaching children biblical songs, bible verses, and stories.

For this year, there are many things to be celebrated. Many of our young students will move onto the K-1 Sunday School class. We have been working on many of the skills that are important for school readiness. We have also expanded into a 4th classroom for our infants and toddlers. On a personal note, I wanted to celebrate the calling that God has placed on my heart. With the support of my Elders and Pastors, I have been able to use my God given talents and skills to help teach and train our Pre-K teachers and bring a more engaging curriculum for the children.



A goal I have for this ministry is to recreate and fine tune the curriculum. With new pre-K students coming into the classrooms, I hope to provide age appropriate lessons as they learn more about Christ and their age appropriate development. Another goal I have is to connect more with the families in my ministry to come alongside them share Christ-centered family lessons to encourage the conversations at home. Lastly, I hope both Children's ministry can grow in outreach through future events.



***Please pray for:***

I would like prayer for organization and time to commit to this ministry. I specifically seek prayer that in moments of the unexpected, that I would give all anxiousness to God and trust that gifts I have been blessed with. Please, pray for those individuals who serve or who are hoping to find a ministry that they may serve and that God will guide and provide for them.

I am so thankful for this opportunity to serve Encounter. More of a praise, God continues to be so faithful in the hearts of those who serve and volunteer. And as God's church grows there is always a need to serve our children.

*Support Team: Josie Chapman, Joseph Janosak*

*Teachers: Josie C, Karen P, Donna G, Sandra M, Noel W, Starla R & Family, Choy P, Lauren & Brandon Y, Courtnee R, Gus G, Lizeth & Andre B,*

*Teacher helpers: Ashley H, Kristin H, Samaria D, Avianna D, Ethan W, Cattalaya S, Bella B, Matthew S, April L, Elvis V, Jettern V., Scarlett R, Gideon W, Carter P*

*Nursery Helpers: Castenaras Family, Rolena O, Kelsey and Brian J, Nokvary, Andrea and family, Julianna G, Emily C, Sue W, Sarah F, Miranda B, Jordie, Pam, Tori G, Aundrea,*

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**Service / Hospitality Team**

**Xay Phongmany, Ministry Lead**

*Xay Phongmany, Ministry Lead*

Our service & hospitality team has been serving well this past year and growing in servants. With the additions of new members on our Porter and Church Set Up Team, we were able to schedule and rotate our members on a weekly schedule. We are hoping to design a service/hospitality team t-shirt so our members & guests know who we are to better serve them. We would like to have more young adults from KEYS to serve on our team. We are also looking for better ways for the new faces and guests to connect with us. We are recruiting for usher to seat our guests and a team to connect with new families after church service.



Please pray for our service team to have more involvement from our young adults to step up and serve in different ministries.

*Set Up & Clean Up Team: Samantha Bouma, Miguel Cabral, Daniel & Eli Minyard, John Qu, Jose Umana*

*Porter Team: Michael D'Alessandro, Julius Henderson, Justin, Bouasay Onesyda, Lanh Saiyarath, Joe Chin, Tee Vongnangam, James Ho*

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## Women's Ministry Penny Saiyarah

Blessed, blessed, blessed! There is so much to celebrate and be grateful for in our Women Ministry. To begin with, we have been able to continue to gather for our church-wide monthly Bible study on the first Sunday of every month for fellowship, Bible study, prayer, worship, and break bread together. This year we are going through a series on Encouraging Biblical Womanhood with opportunities for skill mentoring at each meeting. Each month features a guest speaker and practical skills that are led by different ladies in the church. When we were planning for the year we didn't quite know what we were going to study next, but, as always, we put our trust in God and relied on His perfect faithfulness. God has done wonderful things, things planned long ago (Isaiah 25:1), and this was one of them. We are now able to meet on the 1st Monday of each month in our worship center.



In addition to our monthly Bible study, we have various small groups that meet weekly to study the Bible. These small groups meet on Monday mornings, Tuesday mornings, Tuesday nights, and Thursday nights. These small groups are definitely an answer to our prayers. It has been our prayer that God's word would be the desires of our hearts and to know that "the word of God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path" (Psalm 119:105). His word is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). His Word is a sure foundation that we can build our lives upon.

Another thing we are celebrating is the comeback of prayer night. This year we had a few ladies courageously step up and volunteer to lead prayer night on Wednesday nights. Praise God for His blessing of courage and wisdom, and the gift of time; allowing each of us to have time and ability to serve where He calls us to serve.

Praise God for He is able to bless us abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that we need, we will abound in every good work (2 Corinthians 9:8). As I meditate on His word, I cannot help but be overwhelmed by His love as I reflect on the provision and guidance He lavished on us as we hosted our annual tea party with over 80 women in attendance in September. This event serves not only as a gathering to enjoy the beauty, the creativity, the hospitality of each other or the tea and food, but it serves as an opportunity to invite and share the love of Christ with those who do not know Him. Many of our invitees have never had the experience of a tea party so this was definitely a treat for them. It is an event where both believers and not yet believers look forward to each year.



Not only were we blessed to host our annual tea party here at Encounter, but we were also blessed with an opportunity to once more partner with sister Rachel and sister Leah in Uganda to host a tea party outreach event to women from two villages with a Muslim background. Praise be to God that two women have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior and are now our sisters. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls". (Matthew 11:28-29). Praise God for He is quick to keep His promises.

Another praise report is that In October we had the privilege to host our own women's retreat in the beautiful town of Santa Cruz (Spanish for "Holy Cross"). We had sixty women attend, and what an amazing time of spiritual restoration and transformation God had allowed to take place and blessed us





with by the teaching of His word. From this retreat many new friendships were formed, many new talents and skills discovered, many strengths and weaknesses unveiled, and many lives transformed. I praise God for the ladies that said, "Yes God, I will serve." I praise God for the ladies that said, "Yes God, I will go." I praise God for the blessing of this body of Christ.

Currently in women's ministry we are celebrating that we have more women desiring to study God's word by plugging into a Bible Study group. We have more women desiring to be in a discipleship relationship with another lady. We have more women stepping out in faith and saying yes to lead a group in Bible study or prayer or both.

As before, our ministry goal is to see every woman, young and advanced, at Encounter be involved in bible study(ies), serving in at least one ministry, being discipled (or discipling) through the one on one discipleship, committed to support at least one of our missionaries or ministries, and know the word of God, that His word would take up residence in our hearts, by continuing with daily reading and memorizing Bible verses, so that we would continue to grow in our faith and our love for our Lord Jesus Christ.

As we thank God for His steadfast love and His faithfulness, please pray that every woman, leading or serving in any capacity, in various ways, would not grow tired or weary. Please pray we would be blessed with the gift of time to do what God has called/commanded us to do. Please pray for wisdom and strength for all our leaders to lead with patience, love and compassion. Please pray that we have more women willing and able to do discipleship. Lastly, please pray that God, in His faithfulness and wisdom will lead us and guide us as we plan our Annual Tea Party event in September and the Women's Retreat in October. We have yet to identify speakers/teachers for these events, so please pray for this along with the logistics of the events, and the hearts and faith of the women that will be attending these events.

*Support Team: Breanna Lutolf, Laura Stone, Peggy Chapman, Sandra Meyers, Sue Walters, Tiffany Ruvalcaba*

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## **Worship Ministry**

### **AVL (Audio/Visual/Lighting)**


#### **David Goodwin, Ministry Lead**

I share this year's report with a joy-filled heart, knowing that God is moving not only in our ministry but in His church! Our team has experienced significant growth, not only in terms of numbers but also in the skill level and passion for worship displayed by each individual. It is truly inspiring to witness the dedication and commitment that our team members have shown in their pursuit of excellence in worship.



One noteworthy aspect of our team's development is the increased level of responsibility and ownership that individuals have taken upon themselves. Each team member has embraced their role and has actively sought ways to contribute more meaningfully to our worship services. This has resulted in a stronger sense of unity and a deeper connection within our team.

We are excited to see that the congregation's heart for worship has become increasingly receptive. We have noticed a shift in the church's engagement and participation during our services, not only through the growth of the church but also seeing hearts change to become more receptive! This has been a




source of great encouragement for our team. It is evident that the time and effort invested in crafting meaningful worship experiences have resonated with our church community.

Looking forward, we are filled with excited anticipation for the future goals we have set for our worship team. One of our primary objectives is to improve the sound quality of our services. We are planning to mount sound paneling in the rear of the space and apply other acoustic enhancements to refine the sound even further. This upgrade will undoubtedly contribute to a more immersive and transformative worship experience for our congregation.

As we embark on this journey, we humbly request your prayers. We ask that the Lord would continue to nurture and grow the heart for worship within His church, transforming it into a beacon of His love and praise. Additionally, we seek prayer for our team's growth and unity as we press on in our pursuit of excellence. May the Lord guide us and grant us the wisdom, strength, and unity to fulfill our calling and glorify His name through worship.

Thank you for your continued support and guidance in our ministry. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve and be a part of this incredible journey of worship.

*Support Team: Niko Chapman, Aerreon Castanares, Will Gaines, Aaron Gutierrez, Dulce Jimenez, Sara Lofrano, Gericho Rico, Teyler Robinson, Christian Ruvalcaba, Devyn Sigurdson, Gino Videchi, Mason Walters*





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