



Aloha,

We hope this letter finds you doing well and thriving in your ministry to the Lord.

Our church has had a lot happen since we wrote last. This year has flown by and it is hard to believe that Christmas is around the corner.

In June, we began a Grom Club every Sunday in the summer. We had a special outreach with the goal of having extra kids in church during the summer months. Our Grom club was similar to many church's VBS weeks, but held during the Sunday morning church service. The kids had a lot of fun playing water games, having competitions, arts and crafts, but most importantly learning the Bible. Our lessons were a series on the showdown between Ahab and Elijah. Our mission was to normalize coming to church on Sunday mornings. We are burdened for the next generation to be in church. Having beautiful weather year round really tempts families to take time off for all kinds of things on Sunday mornings during church. We are praying as we disciple that God would work in hearts and convict of the need to put Jesus first, including church attendance.

The Grom club was well received by the community. Also, we had plenty church people volunteer to help run the event. Volunteers are truly thrilling. The kids ministry had a great summer working together to bring kids to Jesus.

We continue to see fruit from the coffee shop next door. We thank the Lord for the visitors that come visit. We have some attendees that are unsaved, but attending weekly. One family has lots of questions about the Bible, and has attended faithfully for 6 months now, but is still hesitant about salvation. Please pray for this family to accept Christ and that I would have wisdom as I talk with them.

Also, continue to pray that God will keep bringing the visitors. It really is astounding how natural it is for people to grab coffee and just walk over for church. We've been very pleasantly surprised at how helpful that exposure has been.

Our mid week Bible study has become a sweet time for our church family. We have a potluck dinner and fellowship before our prayer and Bible study. We are working through the basic Bible doctrines. We did a series on how the Bible came into existence and why version is so important. Our church family had never heard some of the truths that were shared and there was a lot of further study done individually. The enthusiasm has been extraordinary and it has felt like such a privilege to share the light of Jesus's truth. I am thankful to serve a God that has established truth. We are currently studying the doctrine of salvation. Our regulars are enjoying it so much, that they're bringing unsaved visitors to come check it out. We ask that you would pray for God to work on these hearts.

We have had a youth group in the past, and we were able to start one again. We are praising the Lord that we have seen two teens saved. They have each been faithful to church even though their families attend sparingly. That can only be Jesus! One even started giving in the offering. That's a pretty huge deal to have a teen get saved and begin giving. As always, pray for volunteers to serve and for God to work in these teens hearts. I am thankful for the promise that "Greater is he that is in you, then he that is in the world."

We've started serving a Thanksgiving brunch on the Sunday morning before Thanksgiving. Our church people work together to provide a breakfast that is a sweet time of fellowship as well as a great outreach opportunity. The greatest outreach successes we have seen have simply been church members bringing family and friends. For the brunch, our church people are able to see a lot of people come visit, and we have a great time. There's great food, testimonies of thanks, and a message from the Bible. This year we had a lot of families out of town so we weren't sure what the success of the event would be, but we still had 130 in attendance! We ran out of chairs and had some standing. Great problem to have!

We thank God for the new Christians that came and for the visitors they brought that they are praying receive salvation. The majority of our church members are unchurched members of the community that are meeting Jesus and giving their lives to him. It is truly the most thrilling work to witness, that of God transforming a life.

We have been working to develop church leadership in the church, and are looking to have some new positions in the new year. We are also going to be able to break into different Sunday schools before the morning service. That might sound simple, but for a Church plant those little points of growth are things we celebrate! We are thanking God for the growth and also looking forward to this time of learning for our church.

Our church turned 8 in August. In Hawaii, that's pretty old for a church! The past 8 years have had a lot of pivots. Challenges that we had to work through or around. Developing church membership and leadership, and a big part of that was being able to have our family settled. We have had 9 moves since we came to Hawaii, 8 years ago and that is completely fine but it takes a lot of time away from the ministry, when you're constantly trying to figure out where you are going to live and how you'll pay the cost. We have been nomadic this summer (moving an additional 8 times) to be able to do the repairs that were necessary on our home (expensive but completely original to 1969). It's been a tough time financially to complete these repairs, and so it is taking a lot longer than we had hoped.

We are praying for God to provide the rest of the needed funds so we can finish, move in and be established. It is very exciting that we could be close to being settled. Please pray that God would provide the funds to finish the renovation and we would be able to move back in and possibly even stay put.

In closing, we thank you for your prayers for our family and ministry. God is answering your prayers. He continues to do amazing things, specifically in the area of growing the church, developing church leadership, and of our family being settled.

We thank you for your many prayers on our behalf and for your faithful and sacrificial financial support.

Mahalo nui loa (Thank you very much),

Rafael Soto



PRAY FOR:

1. Church growth spiritually and numerically
2. More church space (children and teen rooms)
3. Monthly support to stay strong
4. Vision Sunday (January 5, 2025)

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