



BAPTISM

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you,
not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an
appeal to God for a good conscience, through
the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:21

TESTIMONIES

FALL 2023

4 Things You Need to do to Receive Jesus Christ Into Your Life

1. ADMIT your spiritual need. "I am a sinner."
2. REPENT and be willing to turn from your sin.
3. BELIEVE that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.
4. RECEIVE through prayer, Jesus into your heart and life.

PRAY
SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM
THE SINCERITY OF YOUR HEART

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner.
I believe that you died for my sins.
Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door
to my heart and my life. I receive your forgiveness
and ask you to be my personal Lord and Savior.
Thank you for saving me.

Amen

OLIVIA HODSON

I always knew God was real and that he existed; I even knew that I was a sinner and that he forgave me of my sins, since I grew up in the church with a pastor as a dad, but I never felt a connection or relationship with him. I doubted God and his legitimacy and I didn't know if my faith was my own or my parents. I felt lonely and lost and like I had no real purpose.

But then I went on my first retreat in 7th grade, the quiet time got me thinking of growing my relationship with God; When we got back I couldn't stop thinking about it. I prayed and prayed to God to give me guidance with baptism and to help me know when I'm ready, then he answered. A little later in EVO (middle school church) we had a message on writing a testimony and baptism; that's when the "ball started rolling". At the next retreat, during worship, I prayed and felt his presence; I was filled with joy and started to strongly consider getting baptized when we got home.

After truly receiving Christ, I have been more joyful in some circumstances, focused on God, purposeful, and aware of my bad habits and am trying to work on them. My thoughts and values have been more focused on Jesus and how he modeled life for us, putting aside my worries and distractions. Most of all I have a new and improved hope in life with God in Heaven forever. It still amazes me that Jesus died for ME, for All of us and was resurrected from the grave!

BRIAN HOSHIKO

When my son Todd and Nicole told me I was going to be a Grandpa, I looked back on my life before SBCC, and all I cared about was money, cars, and motorcycles. When we as a family went to church, I saw a change in me and the family. Pastor Gary got me in the Men's Fraternity program in which I saw Jesus as my Savior. God took away my sins so that I could have eternal life. He helped me understand what a family of God is. I believe that God wants to help me better my family life. I still fall short in life but I try to follow the Lord the best I can.

MIA CHUANG

Hi everyone, my name is Mia and this is my testimony.

I've always felt like God has been a constant in my life. I grew up going to church and never felt that my story was special in any sort of way. I've heard testimonies filled with huge life-altering moments and crazy, redemptive stories of God's saving grace. Mine seemed so ordinary.

I was raised in a Christian household and professed my faith at the age of three. Of course, I didn't really know what this meant. To me, Christianity was seeing my friends on the weekends, getting snacks after Sunday School, going to VBS, and playing in my Grandpa's office when we'd visit Evergreen SGV. I never questioned who God was or why He was for me. God was who He was and I was okay with that.

It wasn't until middle school that I started wrestling with tougher questions. I struggled with the concept of predestination and why God would choose to save me and not my friends. These questions led me to learn more about God in those three years than I ever had in my life. I learned that He is a loving God who loves my friends more than I could ever love them. I needed to trust in His character and in His plan. During this time, I attended Mount Hermon Inter High camp, which is a week-long christian camp for middle schoolers. Through the worship and teaching sessions, I felt God's presence and developed a personal relationship with Him. It was during this stage of my life that I truly received Jesus as my Lord and Savior.

Now, my story of how I came to Christ doesn't have huge ups or downs. My life was pretty normal and typical of a kid who grew up in a Christian household. However, reflecting on my testimony, I see that though my story is ordinary, God is truly extraordinary. He CHOSE to save me, and I did absolutely nothing to deserve it. As Pastor Greg once put it, it is powerful when God saves people who are desperate for a savior, but it is even more powerful when God saves someone who doesn't feel like they need saving.

The truth is, we all need saving, regardless of our earthly circumstances. But, without God's grace and love for me, I wouldn't have come to that conclusion on my own. I'm in college now, and I struggle with a lot of worldly temptations, anxiety, and people pleasing. I fall short in a lot of ways. Instead of coming to God as a first response, He is often my last resort, and, even though He has blessed me throughout my life, I have taken it for granted. To be honest, these unresolved struggles may be why I have put off baptism for so long. I felt that I needed to share these struggles, but have a redemptive, happy ending that would leave people feeling uplifted and encouraged. But, I've come to realize that baptism isn't about being perfect - if that were the case, none of us would be here! Baptism is about testifying to God's goodness and grace, and I can confidently say that God is so so good and He has been so very gracious.

ABIGAIL KOH

Before I knew Christ, I was just a baby. I was not old enough to know what was going on. I just went in the 2-year-old room at church. I came to know Christ when I was at Kidskrew. It was before covid. I was 6 & I was watching a little K video. That's when I decided to believe in Christ. I prayed in my head to believe & to be forgiven of my sins. After receiving Christ, I feel like I believe & understand more about Christ. I want to be more kind & I want to read the bible so I can learn more about the old testament & the new testament. I want to show that I truly believe in God. That's why I want to get baptized.

MORGAN LIU

I grew up in a Christian family so I have always known Jesus. I've been wanting to get baptized for a while to be a part of God's family. I came to know Christ by listening to Bible stories and parables from church and my parents. Because of Jesus I can live my life doing good and always knowing that He died on the cross to save us from our sins. Jesus rose from the dead to defeat sin once and for all and his resurrection proves that Jesus is God because nobody has power over death like God.

CHASE KINSTLER

Before becoming a christian, I was raised as a hardline Roman catholic. I went to catholic pre-8th school and I never really paid much attention to Jesus and God besides what was routinely said in mass and religion class.

My father taught me some Latin and would take me to a Latin language church service where no English was spoken and I never understood what was going on. I once had a breakthrough moment at the age of seven when I was old enough to understand the significance of Jesus' crucifixion but never thought much of it beyond that.

As I grew older, I found that church was not very important to me and I even entered into an neo-atheist phase where I believed there was a higher power but wasn't sure if any one religion was the answer to reaching it. In other words, my faith had gone into hibernation and I was largely dormant and indifferent towards Jesus and God in general.

As the years progressed, I had become increasingly disillusioned towards religion which only increased as I joined the military. There was even a point where I would become irritated at christians specifically whenever I was stopped at a random street corner and asked to attend the local church. I thought that it was a waste of my time and insulting.

But one day, I met someone who would later become my wife. It was her belief in me and her strong christian foundation that would prove to bring me back to Jesus and allow me to finally read the bible and really listen to the messages in church. She also opened my eyes to the life of sin I was living with excessive drinking and thinking negatively towards christians who were trying to spread the gospel and tried to be friendly to strangers who didn't know they needed Jesus in their hearts. I had promised her that I would start reading the bible and attending church with her.

What started as a chore for me turned into a passion. I read a page or two of the bible every night with my wife and the more I read, the more I wanted to listen and learn about Jesus. Years of catholic school gave me the general idea but for the first time I felt a connection to Jesus that was not present before. Going to christian church, specifically SBCC has allowed me to actually understand the bible in a way that wasn't taught in catholic school. I feel that the gospel and my understanding of Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection has transformed me into being a christian. I now wholeheartedly believe in him and accept him as my lord and savior.

After I accepted Jesus in my heart, I feel a sense of peace and calmness that wasn't present before. I am slower to anger and I make a real effort to understand others and forgive mistakes that I normally would judge harshly for. I find myself praying often and not asking for things for myself, but for the wellbeing and success of others. I feel humble and genuine in my thoughts for others and I am very excited to be baptized by SBCC. I am ready to start my new eternal life with Christ and want to serve the lord.

GILBERT GALLEGOS

There was a time in my life before I found my faith and God's love where I felt lost and unsure if God was real. The loss of one of my parents really put me in a dark place for a couple of years and really pushed me away from faith. Seeing how much my wife's life transformed after she started following Jesus Christ was what really opened my eyes, I started reading the Bible and accepted Jesus Christ as my lord and savior. He pulled me out of that darkness and helped me learn to forgive and let go of all that anger I had built up to finally find peace within myself.

MICAH NAKASUJI

Before I really started to follow Jesus, I used to get obsessed with things that I know now I shouldn't have been obsessed with. Some of the things that I was obsessed with are toys, video games, YouTube, and T.V. None of these things are what God wants me to be obsessed with. I should be spending more time with him than playing video games, or with other toys and things I like playing with. I know that I am supposed to be able to have fun, but I used to put video games and other fun stuff over praying and reading the bible. I used to think about playing video games so often that I missed out on other activities. I also at times would fight with my little sister. Even though it didn't happen very often, I was normally the person who would start it. I would now like to turn my back on those sins and try to not only think about video games and other screens, but to read the bible and pray to Jesus. I will also try not to fight with my little sister, but even when we do, try to make a short prayer to God and maybe God will help me sort things out with her when we occasionally fight.

My parents were the main people that made me consider baptism. They would talk to me about Jesus and I started to believe that Jesus died for me and everyone else in the world. My relationship with Him began when my parents told me about all the fantastic stories about Jesus and when they told me about what Jesus had done for us and that made me want to follow Jesus and give him my love. I also now want to obey Jesus' commands. It also felt good when I decided to follow Jesus. It made me feel good inside. The process of coming to the decision of choosing to become baptized took a long time. I went back and forth with this decision because I wanted to make the right decision for me now, but ultimately I chose that I wanted to be baptized and go forward with Jesus Christ.

Jesus has really changed my life in many ways. One way he changed my life is that I don't like speaking in front of people, but Jesus made me be able to face my fears and speak in front of so many different types of people. He has also allowed me to do things that will glorify God, which is really good. I think when I get baptized God will replace me with someone who will be able to prioritize Jesus more than anything.

I think He will transform me into someone who will do things in God's favor. Things that will please God and not things that will hurt God. I'm also thankful for Jesus because he died on the cross and rose again, so now I can have eternal life. I also am looking forward to spending the rest of eternity with God.

SHANE ABAD

Let me take you back a bit. Before I became a Christian, my life was a mix of ups and downs, like anyone else's. I was navigating through the challenges of identity and trying to find my place in the world. I was just doing my best to figure things out and often got into situations that were detrimental to myself and others. As for patterns and feelings, I definitely had my fair share of struggles. I was stuck in this loop of seeking validation and worth from external sources, constantly trying to fit in and be accepted. It's like I was trapped in this cycle of needing approval, which often led to feelings of insecurity and doubt.

In regards to sin, well, I can't say I was without my faults. I had my moments of selfishness, envy, and even pride. There were times when I knew I was making choices that weren't aligned with what I knew was right, but it was like I couldn't break free from those patterns on my own. I convinced myself that I had to live for now and that the future was not guaranteed so the repercussions didn't matter. I guess you could say I needed saving from myself, in a way. I was looking for fulfillment in all the wrong places, trying to find meaning in achievements, material things, alcohol, and drugs. But deep down, I knew something was missing, something that couldn't be fixed with superficial fixes or justifications.

I was kind of my own worst critic, always striving to be "good enough" in my own eyes. I'd try to convince myself that I was okay by downplaying my mistakes or comparing myself to others who seemed to have it all together. It was like I was building this facade of self-sufficiency, even though I knew deep inside that I needed something more. Becoming a Christian was like a wake-up call for me.

It was a realization that I couldn't save myself from my own shortcomings and that I needed a higher power to help me break those patterns and find true healing. It's been a long journey of trying to let go of that need for self-justification and surrendering to a greater purpose that goes beyond my own efforts.

Life's still a journey, but now I've got a different perspective and a sense of purpose. There were a few events and circumstances that really made me stop and consider Jesus Christ as the solution to my spiritual search. There wasn't really one lightbulb moment, it was a bit like pieces of a puzzle falling into place. There was this phase of introspection where I began to realize the emptiness of chasing after temporary things. It was like a gradual shift where I started questioning the meaning behind all my pursuits. That's when I started looking more closely at my faith and spirituality. I met various people who, even in the face of challenges, had an inexplicable peace about them. This aspect of their way of life intrigued me, and the commonality that they all shared was their faith and their belief in Jesus Christ.

Learning about his crucifixion, resurrection, and the promise of his return was like seeing the bigger picture. Suddenly, it started to make sense - the idea that there was someone who went to such lengths for me, to offer redemption and a fresh start. Trusting that Jesus was the real deal wasn't an overnight thing for me. It was more like a growing conviction. The more I surrounded myself with believers, delved into the word, and understood the depth of his sacrifice, the more I found myself drawn to him. It was like this sense of hope and assurance that I hadn't felt before.

Starting a relationship with him wasn't a grand, theatrical moment, but rather a quiet surrender. It was acknowledging that my attempts to save myself were falling short and that I needed his guidance and grace. I started praying, reading the word more, and seeking out communities of believers who could walk this journey alongside me. It was a process of building that relationship. Just like any relationship, it took time and effort. There were times of doubt and questions, but also moments of clarity and growth.

It's an ongoing journey of discovering his love and aligning my life with his teachings, day by day. It was this series of events, realizations, and a growing trust that led me to accept Jesus as my Savior and King. And it's been a journey filled with purpose, hope, and a sense of belonging.

Jesus has transformed my life and his presence has truly been a game-changer. Jesus has given me a sense of purpose and direction that I was missing before. It's like my life has been reoriented towards something greater than myself - a purpose that goes beyond temporary achievements or material gains. My thoughts and motives have shifted towards seeking to live a life that reflects his love and teachings. My desires and values have undergone quite a transformation. I used to be all about pursuing what felt good in the moment, but now I find myself more focused on what's truly fulfilling and meaningful in the long run. Selfish desires have given way to a desire to make a positive impact on others' lives, just as he did. Priorities and decisions have been reshaped too. I used to base a lot of my choices on what others would think or how it would benefit me. But now, I strive to align my decisions with his teachings and the values he embodied. It's like a filter that helps me make choices that honor my faith and contribute to a better world. Actions have definitely followed suit. It's not about seeking recognition, but about living out the principles he taught - loving your neighbor, forgiving, and showing grace.

The hope of eternal life is something that is truly remarkable. The resurrection of Jesus isn't just a historical event to me; it's a promise of something beyond this earthly existence. It's the assurance that there's more to life than what we see - a hope that death isn't the end. Knowing that Jesus conquered death through his resurrection brings a profound sense of hope and comfort. It's like a light at the end of the tunnel, a reminder that this life isn't the final chapter. It gives me the confidence that one day, I'll be united with him in a way that's beyond our current understanding.

In a nutshell, Jesus has sparked a revolution in my heart and life. He's changed my outlook, my values, and my purpose. Jesus guides me through the ups and downs, reminding me that there's a greater story unfolding.

JILL SAMONTE

I am Jill Samonte. I have been coming to South Bay Community Church for more than a year now. When I first started, I had a lot of issues. Those issues came all the way from my childhood, my teenage life, and my marriage life. 7 years ago, I was in a really bad place. My ex-husband had almost killed us. This is basically our second life. I was a domestic violence survivor, and I experienced a lot of trauma, anxiety, brokenness, homelessness, fear, and depression. Since I divorced and left my abusive ex-partner, I did not have faith in myself and felt depressed and lonely. I felt I had always had to watch my back. I lost all of my confidence. There was a time that I had to ask God just to take my life, and I just wanted to give up life at that point. I was very broken, and I had hit my rock bottom. I felt like I could not do it all alone, and I feared for our lives day by day.

The hardest part is that I have to show my kids that I am the strongest person because I am all they have left. I have to be their mother and father. Playing both roles as a parent is never easy. I made a lot of mistakes and wrong decisions in the past. My children and I had to rebuild and start again after moving back here from Canada. But since we started coming here at SBCC, I have noticed a lot of changes in my life. I chose to follow God and walk with him even in my lowest moments.

I didn't know what my purpose was in this world before I started becoming a Christian until I trusted in the Lord more and drew myself into him. The first experience I had was when Pastor Cory spoke on Father's Day service back in 2022 about a father's love, and he showed on that video a father together with his son, who has special needs, and they had to do a triathlon, and that was an amazing story. That was also the first scenario of me wanting to hear more about God and his good work in the lives of others. My son also has special needs, and I never felt loved, cared for, acknowledged, included, or most of all, accepted until I went to South Bay Community Church. God has sent me and my kids to this church for a reason. I am thankful that my aunt introduced me and my kids to this church, and I am thankful to our senior pastors, Greg and Gary, because they welcomed me and my kids to this community with an open heart.

I had met a lot of people who became our friends and turned into family. The people at SBCC made us feel welcome. The people in this church also prayed over us, and they poured their love on us. As a single mother, I never felt this kind of love from people that I didn't even know, and despite all of my circumstances and my status in life, even though we are all not related to each other, they still found ways to help us and provide us with extra help, especially when we needed that help. These kind people that I am talking about deserve acknowledgement and more blessings because they showed me how to have faith, how to be strong and courageous, to keep going, and to be accepted.

I kept going to church despite the distance, the location of the church, and being a single mom with two kids and one with special needs. I continue to pray and learn about the word of God because I am so hungry and I am craving the Word of God. I also want to experience His goodness and be able to heal from all the wounds and agonies that I have experienced in the past. Even though my kids do not have a father, they finally know the love of The Father who is our father in heaven. The kind of father who protects them from everything, who cheers for them, and especially who will always provide for them. God has always been the best provider in our lives. And I want the kids to learn and grow in faith and we found that kind of love here at SBCC.

I am healing every day, and sometimes we never want to talk about what breaks us, but we have to remember that being broken does not mean we are less good than others or less worthy than others. Being broken also means God can restore and renew a person into the best and greatest version of their lives, no matter what has happened or what situation they have had in the past. I learned more about how to forgive by holding grudges against the people who had hurt us and our kids and verbally, physically, mentally, and spiritually abused us. It was never easy because there is some point at which the flashbacks will come back and you will remember all of the pain and suffering a person put you through. You can find happiness through God; you do not need to stay somewhere where you are not safe. I learned how to surrender it all to the Lord.

I learned to love myself now and to put myself first. It is very hard to forgive, but it is clear and written in the Bible. If our God forgives, so can we. And when you pray for people who have hurt you and for your sins, believe that you will be more blessed and that you will receive blessings from God in all other places. He sends you his angels. What I mean by that is that he sends you the right people into your life to mold you and help you grow in faith. And I am fully ready to accept our savior, Jesus Christ, and I want to fully commit to and be obedient to all His commands.

I'm excited to be baptized and share with all of you that I love Jesus, and He is my Lord and Savior.

LORETTA JEW

Before I became a Christian, I was a self-focused and self-relying person, accomplishing many things on my own, including become college educated abroad and then migrating to the US on my own and having a successfully career and raising a family. Even so in times of trouble, there been times I asked God for help even though I did not really know who Jesus was.

Now that I know Him and believe in Him that Jesus died for my sins and rose from the grave, so that I now can have forgiveness and eternal life, I want to demonstrate my faith and obedience in Him by getting baptized. Getting baptized is the right thing to do because the Bible taught me so and I want to follow Jesus.

Upon becoming a Christian, He has made me less self-focused and self-relying and has also made me more caring of others. I like to help others whenever I can.

Previously when I faced problems, I did not know where to turn. Now I know to look to God and pray. I now commit my worries and concerns to God thru prayers and trusting He will take good care of me. As a result, I have inner peace and less worries when I face difficulties or problems. God has answered my prayers and I see His provisions.

SERGIO SOLANO

Today is August 23, 2023. I am Sergio Solano, this is my testimony. Before Jesus, what was my life like prior to my conversion? I always felt lonely, I used to feel sad. I used to feel emptiness inside of me. I started hanging out with the wrong crowd. I did not have parents guiding me so I was on my own. I did not have my father growing up and I did not have any support from my mom. I got into tough situations and used to pray to God to get me out of certain situations. I always believed in God and knew that he was there helping me, always getting me out of troubles. The loneliness and emptiness that I felt turned me to drinking and smoking marijuana. Anna and I became alcoholics and we struggled with our relationship.

At that time, we had a one-year-old daughter, Celeste. One day, while Anna and I were having a fight, our neighbor called the police and reported us. The next day, while I was at home alone with our daughter, the policemen and the Child Services came knocking at our door and took our daughter away. She was placed in foster care, and I visited her twice a week just to be with her. That was the most difficult time of my life. I called the people I knew in the community who were Christians. I started going to Church with them. During one of the services, the Pastor challenged people to come forward if they wanted to commit their lives to Jesus. I came to the front and told Jesus that I commit my life to Him. I could not stop crying!

I missed my daughter so much; I did everything that they wanted me to do to get her back. After 8 months, we were able to get Celeste back. That was the happiest day of my life!

We went on to have another child. A Son. Sergio III. However, we continued to struggle with our relationship and our alcohol problem. We kept trying to work on our relationship, but it did not work out. I decided to join my relatives in Fremont, CA, so I moved up there. Then Anna started calling me and we started talking again. In one of my visits with them, while crossing the street, I was assaulted by a stranger from behind. They pushed me to the ground. I could not move. A Christian woman kept talking to me to keep me awake and she managed to get my relative's phone number from me.

Finally, I was taken to the hospital. I became paralyzed from the neck down. I was told that I had a severe spinal cord injury, declared quadriplegic and given a 3 percent chance to walk again.

After 3 surgeries and having been in the hospital for a while. I was finally moved to Baycrest Center. I was completely bedridden and could not move. That's where I met my friend Annie Mason. I always get visits from her, Lauren and Bob, they always prayed for me. Through prayers, they saw my progress! They saw me when I was able to sit up, stand up and take steps.

Then, when I finally went home, I had another battle to fight. My neighbors were mean to me, several times, they told me that I should have died that day and my girlfriend should have left me. After a few months of being home with my family, Anna told me that she did not have a connection with me anymore and that I had to move out. She said she found another man. I was dealing with a lot. This was very painful for me to hear. I had to leave my children and find another place to live. All through these struggles and difficult times, I never lost faith in God. I knew that God is always with me. Annie and Lauren and Bob have always been there for me. So I reached out to them and I told them, I'm ready to turn myself to the Lord, to God and yeah!

I want to follow Jesus. I have been crucified with Jesus. It is no longer I who live but Jesus who lives in me. The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. I want to grow in my faith. I've been attending church services and just recently brought my daughter, Celeste! I attended my first Bible Study online with Scott and joined the Chronic Illness Lifegroup with Sister Tina. Also, I attended the Men of Faith for the first time and met many loving brothers in Christ. Finally, I have joined the Baycrest Ministry to serve the Lord. I want to come back to Baycrest to encourage the many people I know there. I want to love them like how Jesus loves me!

"In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one;" Ephesians 6:16 ESV

RACHEL LAI

Growing up I attended church regularly with my family, performed on stage during Christmas and Easter, and even created a small body worship group with two other girls in church. I watched weekly as my parents served in church and I too started serving, handing out the Sunday pamphlet while greeting and serving in children's ministry. My two Sunday school teachers during elementary were the ones that taught me all about Jesus and I remember acknowledging and accepting Jesus as my Lord and savior in elementary school. During this time Psalm 23 was the memory verse I spent the most time memorizing with the help of my teachers. However, as gymnastics became a bigger part of my life and the home church I grew up in merged with another church and moved to a different city, the church bubble that I became so familiar with suddenly vanished. My family started church hopping hoping to find a new church close to home, but as we visited church after church I slowly became confused and uncertain about my faith and what I believed. Every church we visited and stayed with for a few months just didn't feel like the home church I grew up in and not being able to attend youth group due to my gymnastics schedule also made it hard to make Christian friends and feel connected to the church. Fast forward a few years and I moved to Sacramento, CA for college, and during those years my faith and identity as a Child of God became blurry as life was quickly surrounded by the world's culture and not Christ. Suddenly I had such a tight grip on my life and somehow convinced myself that I could plan my own life with God as the back seat passenger instead of sitting next to me reading the directions out loud. This thought process eventually led to some anxiety and my health really took a toll during this time as I fought over my plans versus God's plan. I was so focused on the end goal of college and the next steps I needed to create to start the next chapter in life when I was still only on page 1 of this chapter. Though I didn't realize it then, my grandparents in Sacramento played a huge part in reshaping my view of God and my identity as a Child of God. The stories about their life and their unshakable faith in God had begun to stir something in me. When I eventually moved back home after college, I attended church with my parents and little sister, but I continued to push forward with my own timeline. Plans that I so carefully calculated for my future kept falling through, I was at a loss of what to do next.

Even though I started to let God back into some parts of my life, I still kept a tight hold on the majority of my life. But God knew what I needed. I remember I was sitting in church worshiping to the song "Do It Again" by Elevation Worship. And as verse 2 came around tears began to well up, and an uncontrollable emotion washed over me and I could feel God embracing me, calling me back to Him, and reminding me that He is and will always be faithful. After that event, I started to reevaluate how I was living, I decided to start serving at my parent's church in children's ministry and provided refreshments with my Mom. I began to rethink my faith and started journaling again and doing devotionals again, but something still felt missing. And that was a sense of real Christian community that I missed from my home church. It wasn't until about 4-5 years ago when my older sister and cousins told me about SBCC and the young adult ministry that they were a part of, though the thought was intriguing, the distance of the church from my house and my introverted personality got the best of me and I didn't venture out. About 2 years ago, I started church hopping alone looking for the community that I longed for and with a great leap of faith, I decided to church hop all the way to SBCC and it has become my new home church ever since. Within the past 2 years, I have been serving in KidKrew Nursery, helping out at VBS, entered into a discipleship through One Another Ministry, and most recently joined the leadership team for young adult ministry. But I think the biggest change of all was joining a life group, God knew exactly what I needed and placed all these girls in my life, their faith continues to spark mine, putting God and prayer first, and their love and heart of a servant propels me to take my identity as a Child of God seriously. I can now proudly say that I am a Child of God, that through the death and resurrection of Jesus, I am able to have a deep and intimate relationship with my Father in heaven, whose Spirit is always with me, guiding me through life. Looking back now, Psalm 23 has and will always be a special verse to me. I'm continuously drawn to this verse in all sort of situations, it keeps me grounded knowing that with Him I can find true rest. And I know my life here on earth is not the end, but when Jesus comes back and takes me home to spend eternity with Him in heaven. So until then I will continue to do my best and invite God into the process of all my decisions. And ask God to help me become sensitive to even the quietest whisper of His voice, for He is always for me and never against me.

ESMERALDA GALLEGOS

My journey started when I found myself at a crossroads not knowing what path to take, I was so lost and overwhelmed. Once life crumbled around me, I felt helpless and defeated. As we all do in times of need, I reached out to God for help. I was shocked at how fast he responded and turned things around. From that point on God's presence became my refuge, giving me strength to face every trial.

As soon as I surrendered my life to Jesus I finally understood what his sacrifice on the cross truly meant, when he said "It is finished". I knew the price of my sins were paid in full. The change inside me was very noticeable to those around me. I no longer hold grudges or give in to anger. I physically felt the weight of all that negativity lift away leaving me in this new found peace. Now, I walk with unwavering faith, knowing He is with me.

SHILOH LANDEN

"I was born into a Christian community in Chicago, Illinois. When I was a baby, my parents would read me what I called "the lambie book" before bed every night. This book was really just Psalm 23, and by the time I was two, I had it memorized. When I was four years old, I asked Jesus to forgive me of my sins and to come live in my heart.

Even though I'm only 11, I've seen Jesus answer many of my prayers. I also hear my parents talk about what God is doing for us in our lives. I feel comforted knowing that Jesus is always with me through the good and the bad. I have hope in him, that no matter what I go through, I won't have to go through it alone.

Jesus said that through him is the only way to God. I'm grateful that he gives us new opportunities every day to try to be more like him.

My favorite verse Philippians 4:13 reminds me that Jesus is always with me and will always be there for me when I need help."

CHRISTIAN HARRIS

My name is Christian Harris and I'm in the 10th grade. I'm 14 years old and was saved when I was 7. Because I got saved when I was 7 I don't remember much, unfortunately, but I know it was the best choice I could have made.

I was raised in a Christian home so I knew about Jesus but didn't pay attention to it as much. I got saved in my Sunday School at a different church and prayed the sinner's prayer.

After I got saved I started to read my Bible more and pray and I started wanting to learn more about the Bible and God's love for us. I also understood that Jesus died on the cross for everyone's sins and that you can only enter heaven once you believe that Jesus died for you. His resurrection proves that God is all power and that He loves us so much He would send his own son to die for our sins. As I said earlier, getting saved is the best thing I could ever do, and I hope to share it with others.

CHRISTOPHER KITAJIMA

When I was writing my testimony, I thought about Jonah. Even though I didn't get swallowed by a fish, life was bad when I didn't follow God. I was born into a Christian family and attended church every week. I learned about God and believed in Him. I prayed every day before dinner and bedtime, but there was no meaning to the prayer and it was more of a habit. I wasn't interested in learning more about God and I only thought about God at church. Occasionally, I wouldn't want to go to church and would find it a task. During COVID, I stopped going to church, and I drifted away from God. At school, I tended to get myself into trouble with teachers and other people. No one could tell I was Christian based on my behavior.

Last year, my family switched to SBCC, and I love this church. Whenever I'm here, listening to the sermon, or attending the middle school group, I notice the pastors here explain things in a way that makes so much sense to me.

The major turning point was during the youth winter retreat, where I was able to focus on God without any distractions. The messages were powerful, and we had discussion time with peers who were also focused on learning about God. One message was about the difference between knowing about someone and building a relationship with them. I realized that I had always known about God, but had never taken the time to become friends with him and get to know Him personally. Another message made me realize how crucial it is to share about God's grace, and how He loved us so much that He sent His only son to die on the cross so we could be saved.

I began thinking more about what I wanted in my relationship with God. I realized I wasn't close enough to God and that I wanted to make changes to be closer to Him. Just like when Jonah got spit out of the fish. Although I already believed Jesus died on the cross for my sins, I prayed to God and asked him to take control of my life.

Here's how my life changed:

- I look to God for guidance in making decisions
- I think a lot more about God outside of church.
- I put a lot more commitment into reading the Bible as often as I can
- I try to change my attitude and behavior outside of church to reflect my Christianity
- I invite friends to youth group meetings because I finally realize that everyone needs to know God
- I put more thought and meaning into my prayer
- I pray to Him for help with my problems instead of keeping quiet or doing nothing about them
- I enjoy church more because I learn more about God
- I try hard to apply the things I learn at church and in the Bible to my life

These things bring me closer to God. I still have a long way to go, but I think baptism is a good opportunity to publicly announce and celebrate how much Jesus has worked in my life.

**Thank you to all of
the Baptism Candidates.**

**Thank you for your
vulnerability in sharing your
stories of your faith in
Jesus Christ.**

**He is so worthy to be
PRAISED!!**

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1st and 3rd Saturdays at 9am
To sign up, contact
caringcrafters@southbaycommunitychurch.com

UKULELE

Fridays at 6:30pm
To sign up, contact: Alan Hamada
rhamada1942@gmail.com

YOUNG AT HEART

1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 10am
To sign up, contact: Larry Higashi
iluvbruins@yahoo.com

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SERVICE TIMES
SATURDAY 5:00PM
SUNDAY 9:00AM & 11:00AM

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