



The Spire

Central Union Church and Preschool
"We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ!"

June 2022
Vol. 92 - No. 6



Pastor's Page

Rev. Brandon Durán, *Acting Senior Minister*

As a child, I loved playing in the ocean waves. I was mesmerized by the way they overwhelmed me. My senses sprung to life during the momentary disorientation as the water tumbled me. My awe of the

water's might spoke to my soul about the awe-inspiring power of God.

At this point in my life though, the word "overwhelmed" typically has negative connotations. When I speak of being overwhelmed, I am usually referring to feeling incapable, broken, unable to focus, and a host of other feelings that I'd rather avoid. Unfortunately, "overwhelmed" is exactly how the recent news cycle leaves me.

In Ukraine, there are continuing reports of cluster munitions, weapons with the capacity to haphazardly kill innocent people, being used in civilian areas including near schools and hospitals.

In Texas, we added to the list of 200+ mass shootings in the US this year. The horrors that took place at Robb Elementary continue to reverberate. Every attempt to understand or imagine the fear and the pain felt in that community leaves me broken.

In the church, an investigation into the South Baptist Convention has revealed that top level leadership intentionally covered up sexual abuse by hundreds of pastors. The leadership knew the identity of the abusers and they enabled them to continue to harm the people in their pews.

Our faith uses words like sin and evil to talk about the dehumanizing actions and experiences that defy the "good" that God proclaimed when the world was created. Our ancient stories bring us face-to-face with evil not far from "in the beginning."

And while it has been with us for as long as any of us can remember, its ferocity still has the power to overwhelm and knock us down. With my soul flattened, I lack the strength to wrestle with the existential questions of evil. All I can do is reach for a simple scripture.

"Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21

The Apostle Paul does not deny the presence or the power of evil in this world. He recognizes its ability to overwhelm us. Yet he clings to the truth that evil is not the ultimate power. There is a larger wave of good behind it.

The cross of Christ speaks of the power of evil in the world, and the resurrection of Christ proclaims a grace that is greater still. In whatever form evil may take, it will ultimately be undone and overwhelmed by the love and life of God.

I do not know how the love and life of God will overwhelm the evil we have seen in recent days. I do not know how God will work through the church and through creation to rewrite these narratives of death.

I know that we will have a role to play in acting with hope and rejecting fatalistic, disempowering narratives. I know that the Holy Spirit persists in her healing work throughout history. And like water reshaping rock, the Holy Spirit takes time to redeem that which the world says could never be changed.

I also know that it is easy to feel overwhelmed when we believe that we are alone. It is for this reason that we are called to come together as the body of Christ, woven together by the Holy Spirit. Together, in our worship, in our service, in our advocacy, and in our prayers, let us intentionally strengthen one another to actively overwhelm evil with good.



Council Talking Points

Carl Schlack, *Council Chair*

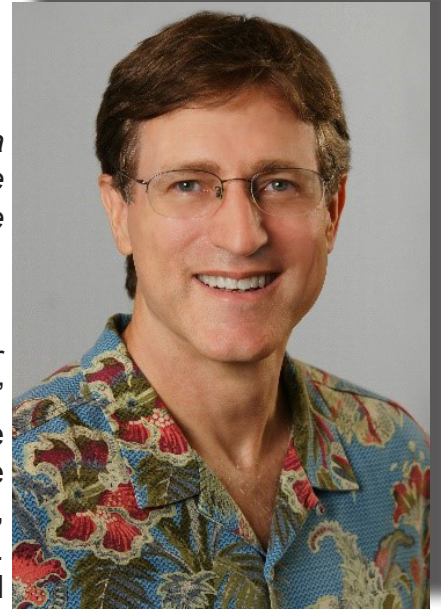
So this is what the Sovereign Lord says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic. I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line." (Isaiah 28:16-17)

One hundred years ago, in 1922, the cornerstone was laid for our Sanctuary on a newly acquired parcel of land located "out in the country" at the corner of Beretania and Punahou Streets. Although it would take two years to complete the construction of the Sanctuary, laying the cornerstone was the pivotal first step, from a construction perspective, since it would guide the workers in their course to complete the masonry. It was also pivotal from the perspective of the then members of Central Union Church as it was an outward display of their commitment to the future. They had peered into the future and realized that changes would be needed if Central Union Church was to address the evolving needs of its members and the greater community. Instead of staying with the familiar and the comfortable, they took a leap of faith and moved, committing their time, talent and treasure to ensure that Central Union Church would continue to be an engine for good that inspired hope and transformed people's lives. The minister of Central Union Church at that time, The Reverend Albert Palmer, believed that the teachings of Jesus made the church well suited to address social issues that affected the well being of many on Oahu in the years immediately following World War I. It was Reverend Palmer who chose the words "Love Never Faileth" that adorn our Sanctuary, words of power and deep meaning that continue to inspire all who enter our Sanctuary.

Now, one hundred years later, we are faced with our own challenges; the world around us is changing as are the needs of our current members and our community. As the new Council gets underway, we will continue looking at our future and will recommit ourselves to ensuring that Central Union Church remains a beacon of hope for the next one hundred years, remembering always that Jesus is the precious cornerstone and the sure foundation of Central Union Church.

Many thanks to all who participated in our Annual Congregational meeting for 2022. It was a productive meeting that not only took care of the Church's business but also provided updates from two committees whose important work will help shape the future of Central Union Church – the Senior Minister Search Committee and the Vision Team. We will be hearing more from these committees in the months ahead and I will also use this monthly Spire article to share news from the Council and the various projects and initiatives it will be considering. Please know that the Council welcomes your thoughts and ideas so please feel free to email them to council@centralunionchurch.org where they will be prayerfully considered.

Mahalo



Celebrating the 2022 Graduates Among Us

Kristen Young, CUC Youth Director

We rejoice with these and all graduates, and the villages of people behind their success! May they feel loved and supported as they continue their journey.



**Aiya Evangeline
Bettinger**

Daughter of Reem Bassous
and Keith Bettinger
Punahou School



Jaylan Elm Syper

Great-granddaughter of
Taps Pratt, granddaughter
of Barb and Joe Elm,
daughter of Nani
Kaiser High School
Plans to study Psychology
and Business



Cayanna Herrera

*Masters of Business
Administration in
Management, University of
the People*
Director of Children's
Ministry



Alex Iyechad

Son of Willa Shiprit
*Roosevelt High School,
Cum Laude, Academic
Honors*



Mark Jr. Ludwig

Son of Mark and
Maurina Ludwig
Kaimuki High School



**Emily June Leinaala
Schlack**

Daughter of Carl Schlack &
Shauna Candia
*University of Hawai'i
at Mānoa William S.
Richardson School of Law*



Dimitry Wellens Jr.

Son of Dimitry and Rose
Wellens
Kaimuki High School



Rebecca Woodland

*Master of Divinity from
Vancouver School of
Theology's Indigenous
Studies Program.*
On May 10, she and two
other women made history
as the first women in
Hawai'i to graduate from
VST.

Children's Ministry Update

Cayanna Herrera, *Children's Ministry Director*

What an exciting few weeks we have had in Children's Ministry! In March, we kicked off 3 weeks of in-person Sunday school as a trial run, looking ahead to a more permanent opening later in the spring. After a 2-week assessment period and the return of the annual Easter Egg Hunt on Easter Sunday, we again began holding in person Sunday school classes for children age 3 years through 5th grade. We have been excited to see one another once again and to experience the fun and joy of worshipping and growing together in our faith in person. We are also maintaining our online Sunday school class for those unable to attend in person and are so excited to continue meeting in this way, staying connected and growing! We also have begun offering a faith formation class for our parents during our regular 10:00 AM Sunday school time, as there currently are no regularly scheduled adult education classes during the 10:00 time slot. We are making plans to open this time to the wider congregation in preparation for the reopening of our regular adult education classes in the near future. Please watch for more information coming soon!

In Children's Ministry, the Lenten theme this year was "With Our Whole Hearts" and the return of our annual Easter Egg Hunt was a highlight of our Easter celebrations. With so many joyful faces and the laughter of children and adults ringing throughout our preschool grounds, we were able to enjoy this special tradition together for the first time since 2019. Each year, Children's Ministry commits to raising funds for one local charity during the Lenten season and this year we chose our partners at the Hawaii Food Bank. It is our goal to live out the theme of loving "With Our Whole Hearts" through supporting the work of the Hawaii Food Bank. Over the course of the morning, we were able to commit a little over \$1,000 to the Hawaii Food Bank in our annual community service fundraiser. Thank you to those who made this contribution possible through your support of both the Children's and Community Ministries.

As we close out the school year, we are looking ahead to several opportunities to grow in faith and community through summer programs! Please stay tuned for more information regarding summer programming from Central Union Church's Children's Ministry! We are planning some great activities!



A Stewardship Duty: Protecting Our Water

Evie Hao, member of CUC Community Ministry, CUC representative to Faith Action for Community Equity

Kristen Young, CUC Youth Director, Secretary for Faith Action for Community Equity

Mother Earth was in mind this Mother's Day

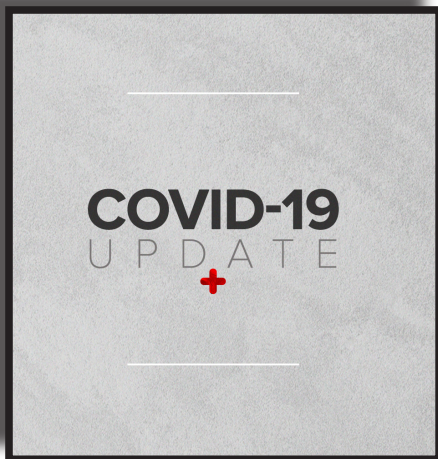
On Sunday, May 8, eleven people with signs stood along Beretania and Punahou Streets to raise awareness about the ongoing water crisis originating from the leaking military fuel tanks at Kapūkakī (Red Hill). Millions of gallons of jet fuel are in those tanks, just 100 feet above an aquifer that provides water for 400,000+ residents from Halawa to Hawaii Kai.

This May 8 group (CUC's Youth Group and Community Ministry, the Sierra Club, and the wider community, some of whom were directly impacted by the contaminated water) was among the many groups around the island calling for the protection of our island's aquifers. For this to happen, the Red Hill fuel tanks need to be shut down and defueled ASAP.

As people of faith, and residents on this island, we care for our neighbors and future generations. We are stewards of the land and waters that nourish us. We act to protect our water so all have access to clean drinking water, a basic essential for life. **Please come and join us when we have another sign-waving TBD.**

This event was hosted by CUC's Community Ministry and Faith Action for Community Equity





COVID Policies Update

In recent weeks, we have seen a rise in COVID-19 cases once again. After 2+ years of this pattern, we imagine that you, like us, are worn out from the extra safety measures and vigilance. Yet our scriptures implore us again and again to care for the vulnerable. Psalm 82 says, "Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy." We belong to one another and it is our responsibility to do all we can to protect one another from this illness.

We are proud of the way our church has stepped up by getting vaccinated, following safety protocols, and offering care to our island community. We ask for your help and extra vigilance for a little longer.

While the virus is causing less severe illness, it is rampant right now and is causing serious disruption to people's lives, particularly to our keiki, whose education has been affected, and to our kupuna in care facilities, who are often quarantined and unable to connect with others. Let us help to ease their suffering by acting with care.

Our safety protocols (masking, social distancing, etc.) will remain in place on our church campuses for the foreseeable future. We ask that if you are experiencing any symptoms of illness, you remain at home and worship online. We also encourage you to utilize at-home COVID tests if you believe you have been in contact with someone with COVID. At www.covid.gov/tests, individuals can order free tests to be mailed to them. Those with Medicare may also be entitled to 8 free tests per month, which can be picked up at Costco, Walmart, Walgreens, and CVS. Check with the pharmacist for more information.

'Ohana, take care and may God be with us.

Your CUC Pastors



Associate Historian: Karl Hedberg

Recently while in the History Room, archiving past Diaconate minutes, Karl was exposed to the fascinating history and archives of Central Union Church. The more he listened to our enthusiastic Historian, Rosemary Eberhardt, the more he felt the Lord leading him to step forward, as an Associate, to learn as much as possible from Rosemary. May 1 was the start of this important journey.

Remembering Our Saints

Please hold the family of **Eleanor Wentworth**, who died on May 8, 2022, in your prayers. Service information is pending.

Please hold the family of **Carla "Pua" Fabella**, who died on May 19, 2022, in your prayers. Service information is pending.

Please hold the family of **Judith Cochran**, who died on May 26, 2022, in your prayers. Service information is pending.

LTCOL John Stepulis, US Army Retired was laid to rest at Arlington Cemetery on May 23, 2022.

LOVE NEVER FAILETH



CENTRAL UNION CHURCH

GOING GREEN DAY #212

E-WASTE RECYCLING

Saturday, July 9, 2022

9:00-11:00 AM - Punahou St. Lot

E-WASTE for RESIDENTS ONLY

**COVID-19 SAFETY ADVISORY: 1) EVERYONE MUST WEAR MASKS INDOORS
2) MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING** *

Acceptable Items

- Computers, printers, scanners -1 load max.
- 1 TV per car
- HI-5 beverage containers
- Batteries, AUTO & LEAD ACID ONLY
- Canned goods for Hawaii Food Bank
- Gently used clothing ONLY
- Used eye glasses and hearing aids
- Prom dresses, accessories
- Pets - towels, blankets, food
- Free towing of unwanted cars, call 291-6151

"Where there's a
need, there's a Lion"



SOARES TRUCK RENTAL



Association of Hawai'i



SORRY, WE CANNOT ACCEPT: METAL, TIRES, PAINT, MICROWAVE OVENS, COOKING OIL, MOTOR OIL, INK CARTRIDGES, TONERS, HAZARDOUS FLUIDS, CARDBOARD, PAPER, PLASTICS, WOOD, AND BULKY ITEMS. NO HOUSEHOLD ITEMS, ONLY CLOTHING.

For questions contact: Rene Mansho @ 291-6151 / renemansho@hawaii.rr.com

Mahalo for recycling from the CENTRAL UNION CHURCH OHANA!