



# *The Spire*

Central Union Church and Preschool

"We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ!"

July 2022

Vol. 92 - No. 7





# Pastor's Page

**Rev. Brandon Durán, Acting Senior Minister**

**W**e enter July with our sermon series, *Lessons from the Early Church*. The biblical letters and extra-canonical writings reveal a church learning how to engage the world from a place of faith.

Christianity has always been an embodied belief. While the various churches addressed different situations, we see that, throughout the early church, the Christian community grew during times of difficulty and persecution.

The Christian faith does not hide from the pain and the problems of the world. Christ did not lead his disciples into the hills to hide from the Roman empire. Compelled by love, Christ overturned hierarchies and confronted injustice. He spoke truth to power and modeled what it looked like to embrace those who society shamed. Christ demonstrated that in times of despair, the good news of God's love is needed the most.

The church that follows Christ will inevitably do what Christ does during times of difficulty. It will pray. It will move towards those struggling in order to provide comfort and to lift up. It will speak truth from a place of love. And through the fog of despair, the church will rise.

Addressing the complex emotions and the fear of the new atomic age, the Riverside Church's founding pastor, the Rev. Harry Fosdick, spoke to his congregation about the road ahead. He knew that his church had an important role to play in serving a wider community that faced a new paranoia. Rev. Fosdick said, "It is going to be a long hard haul. It will require patience, courage, faith that hangs on when hope fades...It is going to take us all, and all there is in us...There never was such a day for the Christian gospel. God help

us all in these years ahead to make that gospel live." Rev. Fosdick wanted his church to see that in days of anxiety and trouble, people would need the good news of Christ.

We enter July with the United States of America's 246<sup>th</sup> birthday. Independence Day reminds me of the wise words of a friend who wrote, "I am grateful that we can worship as we choose and that we have the freedom to speak our minds and give voice to our opinions. I pray that we never take for granted how precious these freedoms are." Along with this gratitude for our country, I also hear voices of grief. The great 20th century theologian Reinhold Niebuhr once said, "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary." Many feel a sense of loss in our country derived from the testimony of congressional hearings, to gun violence, to the looming recession, to the recent SCOTUS decisions.

For many these are dark times. The church is called to listen to those who are hurting, to amplify the voice of the afflicted, and to engage the world with a courageous love. May we at Central Union hold high the light of Christ!



# Council Talking Points

Carl Schlack, *Council Chair*

**A**loha Central Union Church!

The new Council held its first meeting on June 23, 2022, and it was great to see everyone in person. We are a diverse group of seven women and seven men, and a mix of Council veterans with first time Council members, and long time Church members (who remember the “old” Parish Hall) with recently admitted members (who never saw the towering Norfolk Pine between the Sanctuary and the Women’s Building). Our diversity gives us perspective and our desire to serve binds us together.

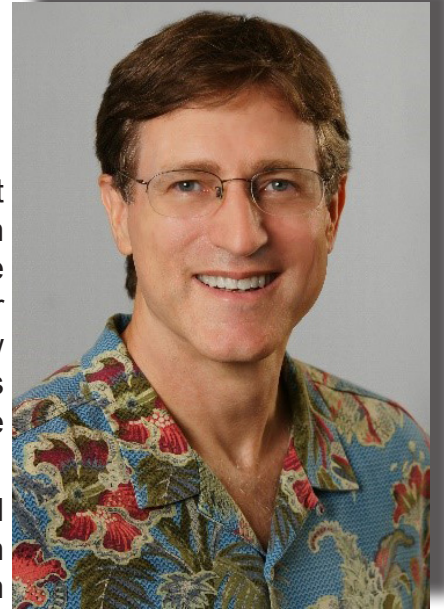
Please know that all congregation members are welcome to attend Council meetings which are held on the fourth Thursday of every month from 5:00 to 7:00 pm in the Parish Hall (except that due to the holidays in November and December, there will be only one Council meeting which will be held on Thursday, December 8, 2022). Should you wish to contact the Council (and we would love to hear from you), please send your email to [council-chair@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:council-chair@centralunionchurch.org); messages to this email address will be shared with the Council. Should you wish to contact me, please send your email to council [council-chair@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:council-chair@centralunionchurch.org); messages to this address will be received by me directly.

After taking care of some “first meeting” protocols (i.e., establishment of our Council Covenant, discussion of CUC’s Conflict of Interest Policy, and distribution of committee liaison assignments), the Council heard reports from Veronique Braithwaite regarding Central Union Preschool and from Don Clifford regarding the Senior Minister Search Committee. Of note was Veronique’s report that a vaccination clinic will be opened on campus to vaccinate preschool children under 5 years old (vaccination is optional), and Don’s report that the Senior Minister Search Committee is on schedule to complete the candidate screening process and recommend a candidate for Council and congregation consideration by the end of the year.

The Council also received a staffing report regarding the departure of Comptroller Sam Okita (retiring) and long time director of Marketing and Communications, Gavin Moffat (moving to a new job). We are very sorry to see them go but we wish them Godspeed. Additionally, it was reported that the Personnel and Pastoral Relations Committee (“PPRC”), chaired by Nathan Wong, is proceeding with efforts to fill the Executive Operations Officer position that the congregation approved in May 2021 (candidate resumes are being accepted and reviewed by PPRC).

After hearing the Treasurer’s Report from David Yee, the Council spent the majority of its remaining time discussing a wide ranging list of projects and ideas that will be addressed in the months to come, some of which included (a) synchronizing fiscal, preschool, and church calendars, (b) moving the Annual Budget Meeting to later in the calendar year (instead of January), (c) increasing CUC’s technological capability, (d) enhancing communications within the congregation, (e) increasing CUC’s visibility in the community, (f) improving our financial reporting, (g) increasing our ability to obtain available grants and government funds, and (h) consideration of new ministries.

While there is much to do, Council members are enthusiastic about making a difference in the lives our congregation members as well as those people in our community that Central Union Church reaches through its various ministries. We invite you join us in the work of our church; if you are interested in volunteering, please let us know and we will help you find a project that fits your passion! As it says in Hebrews chapter 13, verse 16, *“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”*



# Reflections on the 200 hundredth 'Aha Pae'aina

**Martha Balkin, CUC member**

The 200th 'Aha Pae'aina had as its theme, "From Generation to Generation: Mai kēia hanauna a ia hanauna aku". The original plan was for Central Union to host this gathering of churches from across our conference, but a spike in COVID caseloads necessitated a virtual format. There was much useful information shared and many lively discussions nonetheless. Central Union sends five delegates to this annual conference, which consists of worship, workshops and the annual business meeting.

One of the workshops I found particularly thought-provoking was titled "Mission Focused Metrics: Developing New Metrics for a New Church". The speakers at this workshop noted how churches have typically measured success by the number of people in pews and the amount of money in the offering plates. But it was noted that these measures have nothing to do with ministry.

The attendees were challenged to start looking for ways that their church can be the center of its neighborhood. This leads us to the question of how we can engage as a civic partner and reinvigorate mission. How we measure success in this paradigm equates to how we make connections and how we build community.

To provide support to its member congregations, the Conference has developed an Innovation and Engagement Mission Team. Its purpose is "provoke and support congregations in the Conference to create the church we want to see in the future."

We are all aware that we are in a time of great transition, only accelerated by the pandemic. As churches look to the future, it is exciting to see how closely aligned these discussions are with the conversations our church is having through its Vision Team. Worship, workshops, and more from the 200th 'Aha Pae'aina can be viewed online: [www.hcucc.org/aha-paeaina](http://www.hcucc.org/aha-paeaina)



**Carol M. Egan, CUC Council member**

This was my second 'Aha Pae'aina, my first was last year. This time I was more familiar with the process and the various churches. I learned there are approximately 118 churches in the Hawaii Conference of the United Church of Christ (HCUCC), more than I realized!

Among the many workshops, the highlight for me was the introduction, by Central Union Church (CUC) ministers, Rev. Duran and Rev. Herbig, of the Resolution: "On Becoming a Church Against Gun Violence." Members of the CUC Council were also in attendance virtually.

It was a timely and important Resolution as the Congress of the United States passed, and the President signed, the first gun control legislation in decades while, at the same time, the Supreme Court of the United States allowed for an expansion of the right to carry firearms in public, overturning Hawaii Law.

The extensive Resolution calls on the HCUCC and its member churches to engage in meaningful action to address the scourge of gun violence in our country and listed several specific suggestions for action by Churches.

At the Business Meeting on the last day of the 'Aha Makua this meaningful Resolution was introduced and passed.



# Gun Violence Resolution

So many of us have been shocked and horrified by the mass shootings that have taken place this year. Our hearts are broken and Central Union's Church Council felt that we could not remain silent and complacent about the scourge of gun violence. After much prayer and discernment, Central Union sponsored a resolution of witness about this issue, inviting churches to participate in the work of ending gun violence. The resolution was presented at the 'Aha Pae'aina and was adopted by the body. Below, you'll find a summary of the resolution. You can find the resolution in its entirety on our website.



## On Becoming a Church Against Gun Violence: A Resolution of Witness

As Christ's followers, we look to the Prince of Peace as our Lord and Savior (Isaiah 9:6). The heart of Christ longs for peace and longs for us to understand true peace (Luke 19:42). Christ teaches that those who seek peace are known as "children of God" (Matthew 5:9). As peacemakers, our calling is to not only avoid violence, but also to actively dismantle the constructs that lead to violence. In this vein, the Apostle Paul teaches that, to the best of our ability and skills, we are to pursue peace in our communities (Romans 12:18).

For far too long, our nation has been torn apart by gun violence. As people of peace, we cannot accept gun violence as the norm. We cannot conform to this painful pattern of violence. From January through May of 2022 our nation has averaged more than one mass shooting per day. In those same five months, more than 400 children and nearly 2,000 teenagers were injured by firearms. This must change. Our thinking and actions as they relate to gun violence need to be transformed.

The prophet Micah shares a powerful vision of weapons of destruction transformed into tools of cultivation (Micah 4:1-4). The vision describes the action the people of God take after they have "learned God's ways." Micah's vision speaks not only of the dismantling of weapons, but also of the transformation of culture. As a church, we recognize that no one piece of legislation, no singular program, can address the complex and multilayered issue of gun violence. Thankfully, as a denomination, we believe that the Holy Spirit works through each community, each individual, according to their abilities, and weaves our efforts together for good (Romans 8:28).

This resolution calls on the Hawai'i Conference of the United Church of Christ (HCUCC) and its member churches to engage in meaningful action to address the scourge of gun violence in our country. Each church is called to pursue a course of action that best fits their skills, capabilities, and understanding. Actions that seek to end gun violence include but are not limited to: participating in raising awareness and fostering education concerning gun violence, praying for peace, organizing/attending peaceful protests, and/or advocating for legislative action concerning gun control, as well as broader mental health services. Together, by God's grace, we can end cycles of violence. Together, we can promote the healing of individuals and communities (Ephesians 2:10). Together, we long for God's good shalom.



# Sing and make music!

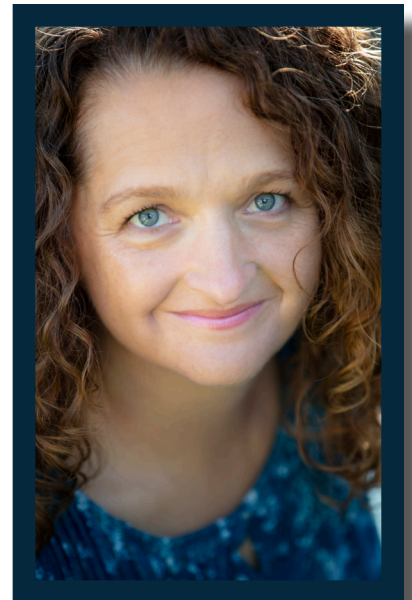
**Margaret Lloyd**, *Director of Music Ministries*

**A**s announced in late Spring, our Director of Choirs, Dr. Jace Kaholokula Saplan, has accepted the position of Director of Choral Activities at Arizona State University in Phoenix. Dr. Saplan will also serve as Artistic Director of the National Symphony Chorus in Washington, DC. I am pleased to share that Dr. Saplan will continue to serve Central Union Church as Artistic Director of the Hawaii Symphonic Chorus (HSC). This chorus will be comprised of members of our CUC choral ensembles as well as singers from the greater community. The first choral concert calendared is the presentation of Handel's Messiah in December.

Joining the Music Ministries department as Director of Choirs effective August 1, 2022, is Mrs. Rebecca Chock. She currently serves as a Choir Teacher at the University Laboratory School, working with students in the 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade choral program. A lifelong educator, Mrs. Chock has also been engaged in the community as a music director of creative seasonal presentations; a vocalist in choral ensembles; and an accompanist. Her responsibilities at CUC will include working with singers in the Chancel Choir, Ke Aloha Pau `Ole, and the Soloist Ensemble as well as partnering with the Artistic Director in chorus preparation for choral concert presentations by the HSC.

Thank you all for your continuing prayers and support of the ministry of music at Central Union Church as together "We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ!"

*Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ~Ephesians 5:19-20 (NIV)*



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## Mahalo and Aloha

**I**t's a bittersweet feeling that I announce my departure as the Marketing and Communications Coordinator at Central Union. Over the past ten years, I had the privilege of working as a staff member for the church I grew up in and call home. I am extremely grateful to everyone who has made my time memorable. From the countless volunteers who helped stuff *Spires*, bulletins, and mail-outs, to the co-workers who kept the day-to-day environment lively.

I leave knowing Central Union is in good hands. Seeing the resilience of our congregation, to worship together after COVID, is inspiring. My hope is that love and patience continue to be the connective tissue

between the congregation, staff, and council. Central Union has been a pillar in this community, and it's exciting to think about how the church will evolve over the next decade.

In the meantime, see you on Sundays!

Love,

Gavin Moffat



CENTRAL UNION CHURCH  
YOUNG(ISH) ADULTS

# BEACH DAY!



Relax & enjoy in good company!

**SATURDAY**  
July 9, 1-4pm  
Waimanalo beach  
via Martha's house  
Contact Pastor Mary for the address

**TO BRING:**  
Kids if you have them!  
Whatever you need to stay safe & have fun at the beach!  
\*Light snacks & drinks will be provided.

Parking is limited.  
Carpooling recommended!  
Meet at 12:15 p.m. at  
Central Union Windward  
(38 Kaneohe Bay Drive)

Questions? Contact Pastor Mary: 808-440-3048 / mary-herbig@centralunionchurch.org

# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



**WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?**  
Investigating the Mystery of Jesus

**For kids K-5th grade**

**July 25-29, 2022**  
**Monday - Friday**  
**1:30 - 5:30 PM**  
@ Church of the Crossroads  
1212 University Ave. Honolulu, HI

Limited space available!  
REGISTER ONLINE: [bit.ly/vbsjuly2022](https://bit.ly/vbsjuly2022)

For more information:  
cayanna-herrera@centralunionchurch.org  
associate@churchofthecrossroadshawaii.org

Hosted in partnership by  
**Central Union Church & Church of the Crossroads**



## 2022 CUC Women's Retreat at Camp Mokule'ia!

It's happening! Renew your spirit in the beauty of God's creation!



**Retreat Theme: Sabbath Sisters:** a time to Rest and Recharge

**Dates:** Friday, November 4 (4 pm) - Sunday, November 6 (noon)

**Costs:** Lodge (\$75) Cabin (\$40)

**Capacity and Safety:** 32 maximum in the lodge; 20 maximum in cabins.

(Camp Mokule'ia COVID protocols to be communicated in October).  
Online registration will open August 1. Stay tuned for details.

## Remembering Our Saints

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

Please also hold the family of **Mary Cooke**, who died on June 25, 2022, in your prayers. Service information is pending.



# 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



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GENERAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF HAWAII  
Quality People. Quality Projects.



Association of Hawai'i



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



**SOARES TRUCK RENTAL**

**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](mailto:renemansho@hawaii.rr.com)**

***Mahalo for recycling from the CENTRAL UNION CHURCH OHANA!***