



# *The Spire*

Photograph by: Lisa Haley

Central Union Church and Preschool

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

May 2022

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# Pastor's Page

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

**C**hurches need to be ready to receive. The Bible tells us “to show hospitality to strangers” for you never know when someone might just be bearing a message from God (Hebrews 13:2). As followers

of Christ, we are called to move through life with open eyes, open ears, and an open heart. Often this means giving a bit of time to the seemingly random.

Last week I received a letter from Kawkawlin Community Church. Kawkawlin township is a small farming community in Michigan. The church is celebrating their 100th anniversary and decided to send letters to 100 different churches. Their stated purpose was to tell others about how God blessed and sustained their church. Their mailing also included a short questionnaire with a hope that recipients would share how God has blessed their church. In this day and age it is easy to wonder if this is a scam or a surreptitious way of soliciting donations. Yet the letter did not indicate any need and the questionnaire primarily sought general information that is readily accessible online. However, there was one part of the form that felt a bit more personal.

“Describe your church in three words.”

Through a small church I have never heard of that gathers over 4,000 miles away, the Holy Spirit invited me to pause and reflect on who we are as a church. I prayerfully reflected on how I experience this ‘ohana of faith. I reflected on how I describe our church to others. Soon, I began to consider variations on their question. I thought about how I would answer the question if it said:

• *Share three words you would want visitors to use to describe your church*

• *Name three ways your church serves the community*

• *Name three blessings you have received from your church*

• *Describe how you support your church in three words*

• *Share three hopes you have for your church*

Every year we gather for our Annual Meeting. At the Annual Meeting we approve the minutes, elect new Councilmembers and hear reports. The business matters of the church are important but the core purpose is the reaffirmation of our identity. The Annual Meeting should provide a long enough pause for us to remember three things:

1. *What has God done in, with, and through us?*

2. *Who we are now?*

3. *Where are we going; are we following God's lead?*

Maybe these are the kinds of questions that the Kawkawlin Community Church is trying to answer for themselves. Their letter certainly seems to speak to these three questions. Perhaps, through their letter, God is calling us to spend time prayerfully considering these three questions. The daily tasks of life can take the day right out from under our nose. It is a gift to take the time to remember that God has provided for us and we are known and blessed, called and empowered.

May we begin this new church year rooted in God's love, clear about our identity, and ready to bear good fruit that blesses Honolulu and beyond.

-PS. If you want to know the three words I used to describe CUC then send me the three words you would use and I will send you mine.



# Council Talking Points

**Martha Balkin, Former Council Chair**

*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

Colossians 2:6-7

**A**t the time you are reading this Spire article, my term as Council Chair will have ended. But the thankfulness that overflows me, has no end. This scripture passage reminded me of our Stewardship theme, “Rooted in Love”. I will always be grateful for the love expressed day in and day out at Central Union Church. God’s love blooms and grows at Central Union, manifested in ways large and small. Personally, I have felt the blessing of your love and care and I have been blessed by seeing you reach out in service and care to others in our church, our community and our world. You truly exemplify “Love Never Fails” and my heart bursts wide in thank you.

## **Here is some news from our Council meeting:**

Veronique Braithwaite reported that Central Union Preschool is approaching the end of the school year. The Dazzle fundraising event was held on the CUC campus with tables set in Atherton Courtyard and food vendors set up in the Punhaou parking lot. This was the first time the event had been held on-site and feedback was very positive. Money raised at the fundraiser helps support the 5 E’s: Economic diversity, Educational opportunity, Environment, Events and Endowment.

From our Music Ministry, Director of Choirs, Dr. Jace Saplan (pictured below) has taken a position at Arizona State University and will be leaving the end of May. Dr. Saplan is supremely talented and will be missed, but we wish him well in this new endeavor.

Buildings and Grounds reported the kiawe tree on the lawn near the Women’s Building that recently dropped a large branch was found to be unsafe following inspection by three arborists. Although the tree could not be saved, we are hopeful that woodworkers can use some of the wood to continue to bless our church.

The Vision Team and Senior Minister Search Committee presented a preview of information they would be sharing with the congregation at the Annual Meeting. The Council will continue its charge, as stated in our bylaws, to conduct, manage, and control the affairs, programs, funds, business, and property of the Church. As these forward-looking committees demonstrate, this is a weighty responsibility, both now and for the future. But we trust that as we are rooted in faith, God’s love will continue to multiply. I know you will continue to support the incoming Council and chair, Carl Schlack, with your prayers, ideas and actions.

**Mahalo Central Union Church!**



# Women's League Scholarship Awardees

**Laura Dornbush**, *Women's League*

**A**nnouncing the Women's League Scholarship Committee 2022-2023 Awardees

On behalf of the 2022 Women's League Scholarship Committee (Laura Dornbush, Claire Gearen, Josann Jenks, Elizabeth Roulston and Sylvia Young), we are pleased to announce this year's 19 scholarship recipients who will each be awarded \$2,000 for the 2022-2023 academic school year.

The scholarships are provided by the Kenneth O. and Doris A. Rewick Educational Aid Fund honoring Reverend Dr. Ken Rewick who served as Senior Minister at CUC from 1970-1974 and his wife, Doris Rewick, who was a former CUC Preschool Director and actively involved with the Children's Ministry.

Please join us in congratulating this year's Rewick scholarship recipients: **Karla Jane Asuncion** (Waipahu High School), **Isabelle Au** (Waiakea High School), **Jerry Dulluog** (Governor Wallace Rider Farrington High School), **Taylor Fukunaga** (Waipahu High School), **Sita Hale** (Kealakehe High School), **Kira Kaplan** (James Campbell High School), **Natali Keni** (Kahuku High & Intermediate School), **Grace Martin** (Maui Preparatory Academy), **Kristyn Miyamoto** (Moanalua High School), **Anela Melia Mosqueda** (Mid-Pacific Institute), **Emily Nguyen** (James Campbell High School), **Leanne Osorno** (Maui High School), **Princess Jona Natania Respicio** (Honokaa High & Intermediate School), **Kaya Uchimura** (Roosevelt High School), **Misimatoka Unutoa** (Kapolei High School), **Jerry Vilorio, Jr.** (Waipahu High School), **Martha Whitaker** (Mililani High School), **Sophia Whitesell** (Honokaa High & Intermediate School), and **Aldren Yabut** (Governor Wallace Rider Farrington High School).

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## Easter at Punchbowl

**Kristen Young**, *Youth Director*

**T**he 121<sup>st</sup> Annual Punchbowl Easter Sunrise Service was held at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific this year. Rev. David Popham, Conference Minister of the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ, shared the Easter message. CUC youth helped to pass out bulletins to attendees and lei to special guests. CUC's Pohnpei Ministry sang two lively anthems.





## Tending Our Relationships with ‘Āina and Each Other

Kristen Young, *Youth Director*

“It’s like a trampoline,” someone said as dozens of our feet worked to hehi (stomp) the overgrown honohono grass that covered the lo’i. Our hana (task) was to push down the bed of grass which would become nutrients when mixed with the water and earth beneath, leaving us knee-deep in mud. It was more tiring than expected, but we saw our surroundings transform before our eyes as we tilled the taro patch to make way for the growth of something new. While we worked together to prepare the area, we exchanged smiles and words of encouragement, struck up friendly conversations with people we had just met.

This was part of a spring break activity in which we joined other faith groups to mālama ‘āina at a small organic farm in the ‘ili (small land section) of Ka’ōnohi in the ahupua’a (land division) of Kalauao (commonly known as “Pearlridge”) in the moku (district) of ‘Ewa on the mokupuni (island) of O’ahu. For many in our group, it was a new experience. For some, it reminded them of “back home” in Pohnpei. For all, it was a memorable time of connecting with the land and each other, deepening our relationship with our Creator.

Youth participant Charlotte Neemia shares, “The day was an eye opener and great way to spend my free time. As tiring as it was, the view was all worth it. The field we went to was a place I often pass by and I didn’t think much of it before. It was an eye opener to see how much hard work it took to prepare one little patch. It was a fun experience and I was able to bond with other young people my age which I sometimes have trouble with even though I may seem sociable. The view of our hard work was a great sight to see and the highlight of the whole day was when a team of people cleared out a long, old pipe that was found buried in the patch. Second highlight was when we gathered in a circle just so naturally, it still gives me warm feelings!”





## *Flowers Given by:*

## *In Loving Memory of...*

Melody Actouka

Aczon-Hao Families:

Naty, George, Evie, Natalie

Miguel & Carol Asuncion

Martha & Peter Balkin

Meg Barth Gammon

Ann Clark & Mike McGinnis

Joseph Dunkle

Jodee Farm & Bernard Mori

Lamela Holt Battlev

Dr. & Mrs. Nicanor Joaquin

Linda Katsuki

Harriet A. Moir

Marion A. Wagner

Dad, Moses Aczon

brother, Errol Aczon

CUC friends:

John Stepulis

Elsie Tuttle

Helen Paris

Taps Pratt

Ann Simpson

our parents and sister

John Stepulis

Harold Uchimura

Bill Coombs

John & Kitty Coombs

Sam & Ellen Barth

the Clark & McGinnis Families

Dick & Dorothy Dunkle

Tatsuya & Takako Uchimura

John Stepulis

Helen Paris

Venus G. Holt

Agnes Clevence

Florence Loeb

Andy Bolosan

Dora Peterson

Mrs. Elisa Joaquin

Mrs. Maria Calupig

Richard Alan Bralev

Venus Gay Holt

Andy Bolosan, chief custodian

Peggy Daniel, devoted volunteer



Virginia Kawauchi	Jim & Joan Fleming
Rose Lee	my first child
Lui-Yuen Family	Logan Snow
	Grandma Cresing
Ron Mesiona	loving parents,
	Basilio & Violet Mesiona
Bea Oates	brother, Bruce Burton Bearss
Anne & Zig Palagvi	our daughter, Laura Palagvi
Richard & Regina Shimomura	our parents
Elbridge & Diane Smith	Elbridge & Edna Smith
Margie & Kit Smith	Patty Smith
	R.C. Smith (Kit's brother)
	Larie Smith
	Dudley Smith
	Betty Smith
	Oscar Nurse
	Marge Nurse
	Martha Nurse
Joyce Snider	Hugh Mitchell
John & Laura Steelquist	Billy Rice Veech
Karen S. Swofford	Edward E. Swofford
	Allan K. Sakai
	Dr. Francis H. Fukunaga
Dona Ulbricht	my son, Robert Ulbricht
	my husband, Don Ulbricht
Fanny Yeung	my parents
	my nephew, Darren Tang





## *Flowers Given by: In Honor of...*

Kenneth & Georgia Len  
Elbridge & Diane Smith  
ButterflyYou

Rev. Durán & Rev. Herbig  
Zenichi Arakawa  
Hyojong You

## *Flowers Given to the Glory of Easter*

Veronica Cheung  
Talbert & Linda Fox  
Kohei Hakamada  
Dona Hanaïke  
Marilyn Keomalu  
Ga-Eun Kim  
Richard & Regina Shimomura  
Elbridge & Diane Smith  
John & Laura Steelquist  
Fanny Yeung  
Butterfly You

*A special mahalo to **Fred Brossy** who provided the decorative palms in memory of **Frances Kay Brossy**, a faithful and active member of Central Union Church who loved life and loved flowers.*

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## Aid to Ukraine: A Big Mahalo from World Mission Ministry

**Rev. Mary Herbig, Minister of Congregational Life and Care** We want to offer a big

mahalo to our church 'ohana for your donations to support the United Church of Christ's Ukraine Emergency Appeal. The Emergency Appeal funds continues to help provide shelter, food and care to war refugees and internally displaced people. It also helps refugees and asylum seekers from African, Middle Eastern and other countries who are

now twice displaced. Central Union Church raised an amazing **\$11,320.74!** Praise God! Thank you for your generosity and we ask that you continue to pray for the people of Ukraine.

## CUC Campus Tours

**Rosemary Eberhardt, Central Union Church Archivist and Historian**

Explore Central Union's history with Archivist Rosemary Eberhardt. With the campus reopening, Rosemary is leading historical tours of the Central Union Honolulu campus on the 4th Thursday of each month. Explore the deep history of the "Church in the Garden" with Central Union's extremely knowledgeable Archivist. Rosemary is also training Docents to ensure that the stories of our church and God's faithfulness to Central Union will be shared with generations to come. If you are interested in a tour of the campus, becoming a Docent, or would just like to know more then call the church office or email ["historian@centralunionchurch.org"](mailto:historian@centralunionchurch.org).

