



# *The Spire*

Central Union Church and Preschool September 2022  
"We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ!" Vol. 92 - No. 9





## Pastor's Page

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

I sometimes hide when the extended family gathers together for a meal. There is always that moment right before we eat when everyone is looking

for someone to pray. As a pastor, I know they are scanning the room for me. It is easy to ask the pastor to pray. Pastors studied prayer in school and practice prayer as a regular part of their job. Pastors should be “good” at prayer. Yet, I wonder what we miss when we always ask the pastor to pray. I like to hide at the moment of prayer because I want to hear someone else open their heart to God.

In September, we celebrate Laity Sunday. On Laity Sunday, members of the church welcome us into sacred space, lead the prayers, give the sermon, and call us to Holy Communion. We hear the hearts of the congregation as church members dare to be vulnerable and demonstrate trust in one another and in God. This cherished tradition is a beautiful way of leaning into the “priesthood of all believers.”

I have heard that many years ago some ministers would treat Laity Sunday like a day off. They would skip the Sunday service because the congregants had it covered. While I appreciate the confidence those ministers demonstrated in the congregation, I cannot help but feel like they missed out. It is inspiring to see others exercise their faith. On Laity Sunday we discover spiritual gifts we might not have known about and we witness people grow in faith right before our eyes.

As a minister, I believe it is my ultimate goal to train the congregation to be ministers. I want to hear members lead the prayer before a meal or share a spiritual reflection before a meeting. <sup>[1]</sup> I want church members to preach in word and deed. I want the congregation to invite the city to the table of Christ. Central Union lives into its congregational identity in a number of ways throughout the week. But once a year we get to witness something special. On Laity Sunday the Holy Spirit will speak through church members to energize the congregation to bless Honolulu and the world.

“I want the congregation to invite the city to the table of Christ.”

In the Gospel of John, Jesus gathers with his followers in the upper room. There he washes their feet and reminds them to love one another. He says to them, “Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father” (John 4:12). This promise to do

“even greater things” than Jesus may seem puzzling or daunting. However, the verse is connected to the promised Holy Spirit that will rest upon them. It is Jesus’ way of saying, “Do not worry. The Holy Spirit is with you. You can love as I have. You’ve got this.”

*<sup>[1]</sup> Your Church Council has a wonderful Council Chaplain practice where a member of the council leads a spiritual reflection each month.*



**Laity Sunday**  
September 4th  
*Worship with us  
in-person or online!*

# Council Talking Points

**Carl Schlack, Council Chair**

*Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47)*

A lot has been said of late about church growth and the fact that the size of many church congregations here in Hawai'i and on the mainland are declining. A church that does not bring in new members at least equal to departing members over time is on a trajectory that will lead to the end of that church. Too often, churches that are trying to grow their membership pin their hopes on hiring a charismatic minister expecting that he or she is all that is needed to reverse the course of declining membership and to bring new vitality to a lethargic church. While such a minister can do much to inspire a congregation, without the active participation of the congregation members in revitalizing the church, the new minister will not "succeed" and some members will conclude they just don't have the right minister. Have you ever wondered why the early Church (in the time of the Apostles) grew so rapidly? It certainly was not because of beautiful buildings in which to worship (they had none) or because of programs appealing to those with special interests (there were none). In the Book of Acts, we learn that the early Church attracted people because they witnessed expressions of God's power at work, they saw the Holy Spirit uniting people and moving them to acts of love and generosity, and they saw people filled with grace who cared for each other and who were unafraid to proclaim the gospel boldly. It was the acts of these early Church members, witnessed by the people around them, that caused the Church to grow rapidly.



Central Union's search for a settled senior minister has been underway for many months now. Our Senior Minister Search Committee ("SMSC") has been hard at work preparing the church profile and other materials needed to commence advertising for a settled senior minister and then to assess applications and conduct interviews of the more promising candidates. A substantial portion of our monthly Council meeting for August was devoted to working with certain members of the SMSC on finalizing essential elements of Central Union's advertisement. Because of the diligent work of its members, the SMSC currently remains on track to complete the candidate screening process and recommend a candidate for Council and congregation consideration by the end of 2022 or the beginning of 2023. As we get closer to the time when we will welcome a new settled senior minister, let us not lose sight of the fact that his or her success will depend on how our actions, as individual members and as a congregation, support his or her efforts to grow and revitalize Central Union Church.

## Highlights from our August Council meeting:

**Central Union Preschool.** The faculty and staff of Central Union Preschool ("CUPS") returned to campus on August 29 for the new school year. Updated COVID health and safety guidelines from the Department of Human Services are being implemented.

**Treasurer's Report.** Church Treasurer, David Yee, reported that the Accounting Department has continued to work hard to update the Church's financials, and that updates to the Church's financials have now been completed through June 2022.

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### **Personnel and Pastoral Relations Committee.**

Good news! Nathan Wong, chairperson of the Personnel and Pastoral Relations Committee, reported that Rachel Fukumoto has been hired to serve as our Executive Operations Officer (EOO). Rachel's first day of work will be September 8. More information about Rachel and her role as EOO will be shared in the near future, and arrangements will be made to give the congregation an opportunity to meet her. Also, our very own Kristen Young will be our new Communications Manager. She will slowly transition out of her role as Youth Director and fill the communications position full-time later this year. Hiring for a new Youth Director will begin promptly.

Finally, please remember that volunteers are still needed to serve on many of our Church's existing committees, ministries and community outreach efforts as well as upcoming communication projects and ongoing technical (audio/visual) work. If you are interested in volunteering and contributing to the work of our Church, please contact me at [council-chair@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:council-chair@centralunionchurch.org) and we will try to match you with a project that fits your interest.

Mahalo,  
Carl Schlack



### **Greetings from our new Executive Operations Officer!**

**Aloha, I'm Rachel Fukumoto.** I was born and raised in Hawai'i, graduated from Sacred Hearts Academy, then went on to the University of Hawai'i to earn my bachelor's degree in Accounting, and am currently a candidate in the MBA program at Chaminade University. I have worked as a CPA and administrator for the last 28 years in a variety of industries: education, a law firm, and a hotel. I truly enjoy working in the non-profit world, knowing that my work

contributes towards a better community. My husband and I have two children and a fur baby. My son is a private chef and amateur bowler and my daughter will be a senior in high school. My fur baby is a Tibetan Spaniel Chihuahua named Kodi. I enjoy shopping, dancing hula, doing yoga, and traveling in my free time. And I'm a BIG Disney fan! I enjoy going to Disneyland, it's my happy place. I'm looking forward to joining the Central Union community and contributing towards Central Union's mission to Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ.



### **Yale group tours campus**

A contingent from the Yale Divinity School was greeted by The Reverends Durán and Herbig and taken on tour by Rosemary Eberhardt and The Reverend George Scott of the Church's History Museum located in the balcony of the Sanctuary. The group of ten comprised of the Dean, Directors, and Faculty. They were shown portraits of graduate school mates: The Reverends John Diel, Samuel Damon, Douglas Birnie, Doremus Scudder, Albert Palmer, and Thomas Crosby. They were duly impressed seeing the original letters of correspondence between Palmer and Ralph Adams Cram, Bostonian architect of the Sanctuary. Future connections with the group are on the horizon.





## I will sing!

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



The CUC Music Ministries department is excited to welcome Emily Vidler as soprano Soloist effective September 1, 2022. She currently serves as a Voice Teacher at the Mānoa School of Music and the Arts and is a Freelance Classical Soprano.

Emily holds a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Music Performance/Bachelor of Arts in Spanish, *summa cum laude*, from the University of South Dakota and a Master of Music in Vocal Music Performance from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She was also a member of the Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio, Hawai'i Opera Theatre.



An active soloist and collaborative musician, Emily has been engaged in the community teaching voice and beginning piano students; performing classical vocal music for a variety of organizations and private events; and participating in various choral ensembles. Her responsibilities at CUC will include solo work; singing with the Soloist Ensemble and Ke Aloha Pau 'Ole; and serving as a soprano section leader with the Chancel Choir and Hawai'i Symphonic Chorus.

Join me in welcoming Emily to our choral ministry as together "We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ!"

*I will sing of your love and justice; to you, O Lord, I will sing praise. ~Psalm 101:1 (NIV)*



**Rebecca Chock**

## New Director of Choirs shares...

### What excites you as the Director of Choirs?

I'm looking forward to singing multitudes of great worship music with wonderful people in a beautiful and awe-inspiring space, Central Union Church. I think when people ask what it's like to live in Hawai'i, I want to say, "Living the dream!" Though I'm not native to Hawai'i, I've lived here with my family for six years now and it feels like home to me in every sense of the word.

### What is your vision for CUC choirs?

I heard it said recently that God's love for us is perfect, but that our ability to feel that love is a work in progress, a skill we need to develop. For me, I have found music and singing together to be a powerful tool to help in this journey; learning how to receive and feel the peace and comfort from a God who loves and knows each one of us.

### What is one hope you have?

I hope that we can support one another as we learn how to make music again, share our songs with one another, and find new voices and people to join us as we grow.

### WE WILL SING!

The Chancel Choir will be reconvening for the new season on **Thursday, September 1st, at 6 p.m.**, in the Music Building.

If you love to sing, the Choir would welcome your participation.

**Join us as we praise God through choral music and share good fellowship with each other!**

# Children's Ministry Adventures!

**Cayanna Herrera**, *Director of Children's Ministry*

Summer has flown by and in Children's Ministry it was full of adventure! Early in the summer, time was dedicated to preparing not one but two summer programs for our families. Weeks were spent collecting curriculum, volunteers, and supplies and during the weeks of July 25-29 and August 1-5, we ran back-to-back week-long events.



First, we partnered with Church of the Crossroads to present **Vacation Bible School** for families of both churches. This

is the first time in several years that CUC has held Vacation Bible School and though the week's activities were not held on our campus, we had several families participate. Our theme was "Who Do You Say I Am? Investigating the Mystery of Jesus" and our junior detectives solved mysteries each week to better understand who Jesus is and how much God loves us! This exciting program also focused on sharing what we have learned about Jesus and His mission of love with those around us through acts of compassion for our families, church 'ohana, and larger community.

Next, Children's Ministry held our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual **Compassion Camp** from August 1-5 for our Central Union Church Preschool families. With a group of 20 children, our keiki ranged from 3-11 years of age! We once again utilized our "Who Do You Say I Am?" curriculum where we solved mysteries together as we learned to share our compassion with those around us.



Following Compassion Camp, we held our annual Backpack Blessing. For the last two years, this has been a drive-through event and we were excited to be able to once again hold our **Backpack Blessing** during worship. Also on Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, we held our End-of-Summer/Back-to-School event between the 9:00 and 11:00 services. Shrieks of delight filled the air as our keiki splashed in the water of the CUPS lawn sprinklers and enjoyed popsicles afterward.





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As we move into our fall programming, we do so with our eyes firmly fixed on our next exciting step forward in Children's Ministry. We are currently working toward rolling out our Godly Play program with the goal of kicking off this beautiful faith practice on the first Sunday of Advent. Godly Play is a method of faith formation that focuses on growing faith through experiential learning. This is an ambitious goal, and we will need many hands to ensure the successful launch of this next phase of ministry for our keiki.



"The Sower" Full Godly Play Session  
by GodlyPlayFoundation via YouTube

For more information about Godly Play, please watch our bulletins and e-Blasts. You can also learn more by going to [godlyplayfoundation.org](http://godlyplayfoundation.org) and the ["GodlyPlayFoundation" YouTube channel](#) where you can find both introductory and story videos. I pray the Godly Play experience will be a blessing to each of us as we grow in our faith together!

## Youth join SWAG rally at Capitol

**Kristen Young**, Youth Director

Several of our young people joined the Sustainable Wave of Action Gathering ("SWAG") hosted by the Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition at the Hawai'i State Capitol on July 31st to join with people from around the island in calling for real action from people in power on the climate crisis and other environmental hazards such as the leak at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility that is threatening our water supply on O'ahu.

Youth made their own signs with messages saying: "Planet over profit." "Islands are sinking. We need to stop just thinking and ACT." "Protect our water." "Love Thy Land = Love Thy Neighbor."

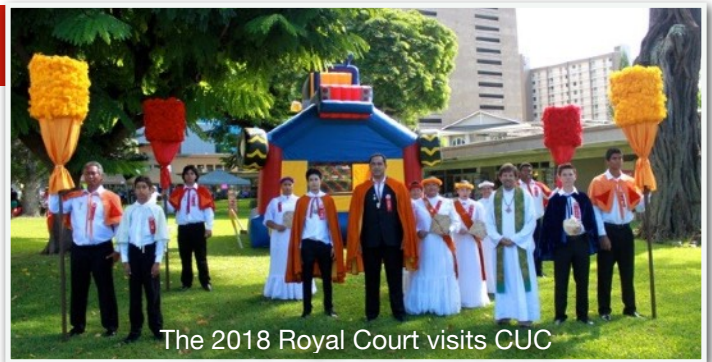


Joining scrolls of signatures in  
support of #ShutDownRedHill

Did waving signs as a group create the change we need? No. But just as important as the change we make is the change and spark that ignites within each of us when we come together for a common purpose. Isn't that why we come to church on Sundays to worship as a community? How we combat the climate crisis and care for creation will look different for each of us. When we rally, we bring hope to our neighbors and encourage one another to continue in our efforts toward a better world.

## Aloha Sunday - September 18

Central Union Church has a long tradition of hosting the Royal Court during Aloha Week in Hawai'i. For the community at large (and the Hawaiian community in particular), it is a statement that Central Union is highly supportive of Hawaiian culture. For our own congregation, it is a reminder of the heritage of our land, and its strong Christian foundation.



This year's Aloha Festival celebrates Aloha 'Āina: Love of the Land. The foundation of Aloha 'Āina is a reverence for the 'āina (land) as a venerated ancestor. Subsequently, we collectively have kuleana (responsibility) to care for the land from whom we receive nourishment. 'Āina literally means 'that which feeds,' or 'that which provides sustenance,' and includes all of nature. The more we care for the land now, the greater care the land will have for our descendants. This same love for the land exists throughout the world and is an affirmation of our humanity. As we celebrate our love for these islands we call home, we invite you to Aloha 'Āina in your part of our world community. E Aloha 'Āina Pū Kākou! Let's all get active in caring for the land!

## Give Aloha in September!

During September, Central Union Church participates in [Foodland's Give Aloha program!](#)

Every year, Foodland, Sac 'n Save, and Western Union combine to donate money to the charities that are important to their customers in Hawai'i. For each dollar given, Foodland and the Western Union Foundation will match a portion of that donation, up to a total of \$250,000 for all organizations combined. Donor names will be confidential and will not be released.



You can pay your September pledge, or donate up to a cumulative total of \$249 (per person, per organization). Go to Foodland with your Maika'i card [free at any Foodland service counter] and go to any cash register to pay your donation with cash/check/credit card, naming **Central Union Church - #78511** or **Central Union Preschool - #78270** as a recipient. You will receive two receipts with your name, Central Union Church's (or Preschool's) name, and the donation amount on them. Keep one for your records and turn one into the church office by mail, or in the collection plate, so you will get credit on your giving statement.

Please pay your September pledge, or give an extra donation, through "Give Aloha!" We benefit tremendously from Foodland's generosity, but only if you go to Foodland in September and donate. Thank you for all your support and let's make our money go further through "Give Aloha"! Questions? Please contact Leslie at 808-440-3015 or [leslie-luiyuen@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:leslie-luiyuen@centralunionchurch.org).

## ~ Remembering our Saints ~

Please hold the family of **Linda Kidani**, who died on June 2, 2022, in your prayers. Private services were recently held by her family.