



The Spire

Central Union Church and Preschool

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

October 2022

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Five Ways to Help in the Days Ahead

Rev. Mary Herbig, Minister of Congregational Life and Care

Over the past several weeks, so many members of our church 'ohana have reached out to me. Many have come to share their sadness about Pastor Brandon leaving.

Others have expressed fear about how we will fare in the absence of a senior minister. What has truly touched me, though, is that almost every person who has come to talk with me has asked me the same two questions:

How are you doing? and How can I help?

I hear in these questions deep care for Central Union's staff and your expressions of concern have been a balm for my soul. It is a reminder to me – and to us all – that we are in this together. The mission and ministry of Central Union is not the kuleana of the staff or of any one person, but is instead in the hands of all of us. This is why I have been especially moved by that second question: *How can we help you?*

While I'm sure there will be many specific tasks in the coming months that our staff will need help with, there are some larger things that I think would help more:

1. Pray for our church. Over the past three years, we have experienced profound change together. I am convinced that we are on the precipice of something new and beautiful. *You can help us by praying for our discernment and preparation for whatever*

God will bring forth, as well as by praying for the new settled senior minister whom God is already calling. There's also a set of weekly prayer requests in your e-Blast.



2. Care for one another. In the coming months, it will be more important than ever for us to support one another and hold one another in our hearts. I know our staff will do the best we can to care for our congregation, but I also know that the more ways we are reaching out to one another, the more hearts we can touch. *You can help us by reaching out to and caring for one another!*

3. Offer grace. Central Union's staff and lay leaders truly pour their hearts into their work, giving of themselves in remarkable ways. Unfortunately, we do not have Jesus Christ on our staff (though he is on call), so we will inevitably make mistakes. *You can help us by being quick to offer grace to us all as things get more hectic. You can help even more by reminding others to offer grace, too!*

4. Focus on the good. Change is difficult and scary, and sometimes our grief colors the lens through which we see things. It's important for us to name our grief, but it's equally important to name the ways that things are going well, the ways that God is providing! *You can help us by becoming a "gossiper of the good," sharing with others the blessings you see among us.*

5. Join our "One 'Ohana" distribution list. There are many manini tasks that we will need help with in the coming months! Add your name to our list to receive emails with specific errands and tasks that you can sign up for. *You can help us by signing up for our "One 'Ohana" distribution list online at www.bit.ly/CUCohana.*

Church, the scriptures speak of God as our strength, our help, our shepherd, and our guide. I know that God will show up in all of these ways and more in the coming months and we will be more than okay. We will be blessed and transformed.

Council Talking Points

Carl Schlack, Council Chair

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.” —Jeremiah 29:11*

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean upon
your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him
and He will make straight your paths. —Proverbs 3:5-6*



Sometimes the message you receive is not what you wanted to hear. Sometimes it catches you off guard, disrupts your fine-tuned sense of equilibrium, and upsets your carefully constructed plans and visions of the future. There are many Biblical accounts of people who received such a message—Moses, Jonah and Saul (who became Paul) to name just a few. God had a plan for each of them, even if they did not understand it at the time. From such stories we learn to put our faith in God, to trust in His vision when we have begun to question our own.

When I learned of Pastor Brandon’s decision to relocate to the mainland at the end of the year, I, like many in our congregation, was surprised and saddened. While most understand and empathize with his desire to be closer to his and Janelle’s family, there remains a shared sense of loss—the loss of a gifted preacher, of a caring and compassionate pastor, of a voice for justice, and of a good man and beloved friend. Pastor Brandon has been a vital part of the life of our congregation for seven years, the last two of which as Acting Senior Minister leading us during an already transformational time that was exacerbated by a world-wide pandemic (which will be known in our history as the “COVID years”). Central Union Church has been blessed by his faithful and loyal service; so, while we are sad at his pending departure, let us not forget the joy we have experienced, and in our sense of loss, let us not forget the gifts we have received.

Planning for a “farewell” event is underway so that all may have an opportunity to gather in celebration of our time together before Pastor Brandon leaves work in late November. Details of the “farewell” event will be shared once they become available.

Just as we know God has plans for Pastor Brandon and his family, we also know He has plans for Central Union Church. Our next Senior Minister is out there somewhere, and this Sunday, October 9, 2022, at all of our worship services (9 and 11 a.m. in-person, 10 a.m. online), our Senior Minister Search Committee will provide a progress report to the congregation as well as show the Love Never Fails documentary video that was created for inclusion in our Church Profile to enhance our ability to attract the best Senior Minister candidates. Also, this Sunday we will kick off the

REACH
Stewardship
Campaign so
please make
every effort to
attend one of
our services.

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A transition plan is ongoing to ensure we have the necessary support for Pastor Mary during the bridge period between Pastor Brandon’s departure and the arrival of our next Senior Minister. However long that bridge period may be, and despite the uncertainty that change brings, let us go forward in faith and let us trust that God has a plan for Central Union Church. And let us not fail to do our part, individually and collectively, as the body of Christ, to ensure that Central Union Church will always be a place of acceptance, a place of tolerance, a place of forgiveness, and a place of love.

Finally, if you are interested in volunteering to serve on any of our Church’s committees, ministries and community outreach efforts, please contact me via email at council-chair@centralunionchurch.org so you can be connected with a project that suits your interest. All are welcome!

Mahalo,
Carl Schlack

Members Lead Worship on Laity Sunday, September 4th

**So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.
But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.”
Show me your faith apart from works,
and I by my works will show you faith.
—James 2:17-18**



9 a.m. Serving Aloha panel: Francine, Dona, Erichson, Nathan, and Marion



In the 11 a.m. service, youth lead the Time with Keiki, sharing about faith and action.



11 a.m. Serving Aloha panel: Jonathan, Amy, Dona, Matt, Bruce

Preschoolers Return to In-Person Praise



With the thoughtful leadership of Veronique Braithwaite, the Central Union Preschool (CUPS) chapel service returned to in-person praise last month. On September 28th the sanctuary bustled with the vibrant smiles and joyful energy of the CUPS keiki. The students and teachers of Room 6 highlighted the service with their song, "The World is a Rainbow." Their song and their paintings illustrated the children's message that God makes us all different and that makes us special.



Music Teacher and Director of Children's Ministries, Cayanna Herrera led the room of children and parents in songs of praise. Pastor Brandon built on Room 6's lesson of diversity and shared about the values of curiosity and learning. Seeing the children in the pews, hearing their voices unified in the Lord's Prayer, and feeling the joy in the room gave us great hope for a great year ahead at CUPS.

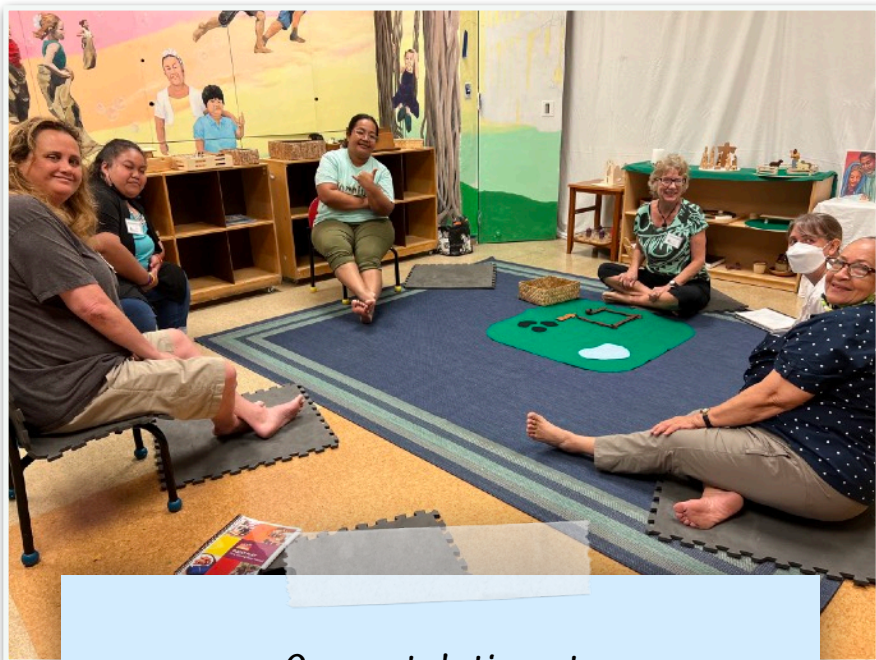
Order your Christmas trees, door charms, and wreaths from Habilitat and support Central Union Preschool!



Pre-order ends: Tuesday, October 25
Order online at www.HawaiiChristmasTrees.com

Children's Ministry Volunteers Trained in Godly Play

We are excited to bring Godly Play to Central Union's Children's Ministry! Our volunteers just completed three weeks (20 hours) of training in the Godly Play method, which is influenced by the Montessori method of teaching. While the focus was on preparing to teach our keiki, the training also offered a major blessing to our volunteers, who are now considered Godly Play "storytellers." Robyn Gerell says, **"Godly Play has changed my life! It has changed the way I think about God and the way I think about the Bible. I can't wait to share it."** We also can't wait to share it! Godly Play will kick off on the first Sunday of Advent – November 27. We ask that you hold our staff, storytellers, and keiki in prayer as they prepare.



*Congratulations to
Robyn Gerell, Crystal Fredrick,
Daphne Anson, Haydé Villafuerte,
Cayanna Herrera, and Gladys Yopez
for successfully completing
Godly Play training!*





Meet CUC's New Thrift Shop Manager!

I'm **Joanne Matsumoto**, and I'm enjoying working with all of the volunteers in the Thrift Shop. I'm married to my husband Derek and have been a stay-at-home mom to our four daughters for the last 23 years. I spend my free time cooking, baking, and being the Uber driver for our daughters and their friends. We also love to go thrifting, so I would say that this might be the perfect job for me.

You can reach Joanne at: thriftshop@centralunionchurch.org

Central Union Celebrates Aloha Sunday



Continuing our longstanding tradition, the Royal Court joined us at the 9 a.m. worship service on Aloha Sunday, September 18th. The celebration of Aloha Sunday reminds us of the heritage of the 'āina that sustains us, and our kuleana—responsibility—to remember the past so that we may live in the present with greater love and truth.

A glorious arrangement of flowers, prepared by Gail Atwater with assistance from Bonnie Andrew, adorned the communion table in celebration of our honored guests. Mahalo nui to our Flower Committee and supporters who help bring nature's beauty into our worship spaces!



Generations Sing “Let There Be Peace on Earth”



Children and youth joined Chancel Choir members in singing “Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me!” Our new Director of Choirs, Rebecca Chock, brought generations of voices together for this special song on September 11th.



Blessing of Pets



Furry and feathered friends flocked to the church campus on October 2nd to receive a special blessing; they also filled screens in our online worship service. Every year on the Sunday closest to October 4th, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi is celebrated

with pet blessings! Saint Francis of Assisi lived a life of simplicity, charity and humility in the 13th century, and is remembered as a champion of justice and lover of animals. We give thanks for the ways God's love is made tangible through all creatures, including our beloved pets!

Remembering Our Saints

Please hold the family of **Elizabeth Etse**, who died on September 14, 2022, in your prayers. Services will be held on Saturday October 22nd at 1 p.m.

Please also hold the family of **James Case**, who died on September 21, 2022, in your prayers. Services will be held on Sunday, October 30th at 3:30 p.m.