



The Spire



Pastor's Farewell

Rev. Brandon Durán, Acting Senior Minister

The Book of Worship gives us words as we approach a farewell. The Service of Release begins by saying:

“Our church family is constantly changing.

People come and go. Babies are born. Children grow up. People commit themselves to one another. Loved ones and friends among us come to the end of their lives. Individuals move into our community and church life. Others leave us, moving away to new places, new experiences, and new opportunities. It is important and right that we recognize these times of passage, of ending and beginnings.”

Every pastor knows at the beginning of their ministry with a church, that it will one day end. We do not know when we will need to say our goodbye but we know those words are set before us. The only eternal shepherd is the Good Shepherd. The pastor's hope is to be faithful to their calling, faithful to the community, and faithful to God for the length of time we are given. In this regard, I have often felt inspired by the verse, “Live a life worthy of the calling you have received” (Ephesians 4:1). I hope I have been faithful to this calling with you. I hope love has been evident and God has been glorified. I deeply feel the “Recognition of the End” language that I will be called upon to speak in the Service of Release.

“I thank Central Union, its members and friends, for the love, kindness, and support shown me these last 7 years. I ask forgiveness for the mistakes I have made. I am grateful for the ways my leadership has been accepted. As I leave, I carry with me all that I have learned here.”

The gifts you have given over the years are a testimony to a loving and generous community. God has blessed me and my family through you.

Pastors and parishioners form profound bonds through years of celebrations and challenges, as well as shared care and service. The great difficulty of an authentic mutual love is an equal measure of grief at our goodbye. At the time of departure, the Ministerial Code of Ethics calls all pastors to fully step away in order to make space for a new pastor to step in fully.

“It is the expectation that upon departure, a pastor will not return to serve the congregation in a pastoral capacity...[and] a minister will observe a no-contact boundary with congregants and will teach congregants to observe the same. This enables the past minister to fulfill the ministerial code of ethics, in support of the congregation's relationship-building with a new minister.”

I have no doubt that the Holy Spirit is already preparing a minister to serve you and walk beside you into the future. I have every confidence that Pastor Mary will continue to bless you, inspire you, and will be faithful in her calling with you. I know firsthand that Central Union has spiritually mature and gifted lay leaders. And even more than this, I am convinced that the God who has been faithful to you for generations past will be faithful for generations to come. It is for this reason that the closing prayer of the Service of Release holds power.

“God whose everlasting love for all is trustworthy help each of us to trust the future which rests in your care. The time we were together in your name saw our laughter and tears, our hopes and disappointments. Guide us as we hold these cherished memories but move in new directions until that time to come when we are completely one with you and with each other. Amen”

Friends, I have loved being one of your pastors, I love you, and the thought of Central Union will never fail to fill my heart with aloha.

Council Highlights

The Central Union Church Council recently held its penultimate meeting of 2022. The meeting opened with a prayer by late monk and theologian Thomas Merton.



*My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am
following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.
Amen.*

Here are a few highlights from the October Council meeting:

Pastor's Report – October marked Pastor Brandon's final CUC Council meeting. Pastor Brandon shared final thoughts which included: gratitude for the Council and CUC's volunteers, the encouragement to keep the CUC Council unique from other non-profit boards through the reliance on the Holy Spirit, a focus on spiritual growth, and the prioritization of Christ like behavior. Pastor Brandon concluded his remarks by summarizing the UCC Liturgy of Farewell and Release, saying, "Thank you, forgive me, and I love you." His last Sunday with us is November 20th.

Godly Play – Children's Ministry Director, Cayanna Herrera, shared the new children's curriculum Godly Play through an experiential presentation. We are preparing for 2 Godly Play spaces and have trained 6 storytellers. Godly Play will be kicking off in the season of Advent.

Executive Operations Officer's Report – Rachel Fukumoto reported that we are switching to Tithe.ly for our online giving platform as it will be a better value for our church's needs. Two finalists have been identified for the Accounting Manager position and will be interviewing soon with the Personnel and Pastoral Relations Committee (PPRC). The Youth Director position has been posted. Rachel also shared the Treasurer's report which named the decline in investment accounts in line with current market conditions. She noted we are in good shape on the Operations side. Finally, a word of celebration: all ministries have turned in their budget requests on time!

Central Union Preschool Update – Application for enrollment has opened for 3-5 year olds. The Preschool Committee met this month on allocation of the final 2022 Dazzle revenues. The preschool committee is recommending 50% allocation for educational opportunities, with the other 50% allocated to the CUPS environment. The Council unanimously passed their recommendation.

PPRC – The PPRC will be meeting soon to discuss the remaining open positions and will continue exploring plans for a Bridge Minister in this time.

Buildings and Grounds – The Memorial Benches policy and plan is moving forward and will be ready soon.

Senior Minister Search Committee – Notice of the position has been posted in various well known Christian publications. At the time of the meeting, 37 inquiries had been received.

Grant Opportunities – Council leadership and staff have been working with Haystack Essentials in order to apply for and obtain multiple grants. We are submitting a letter of intent for a grant that would build on and enhance opportunities for our Pohnpei Ministry in providing community engagement through their online services. We will continue to work on requests for potential funding for various initiatives throughout our church.

Pastor Mary's Request – Pastor Mary asked for the Council to help recruiting people to be readers throughout Advent. We need Advent Candle readers at all services. Pastor Mary would also like to increase the number of care cards sent in December.

Pastor Brandon's Aloha Celebration will be on November 13th at 12 p.m. in the Parish Hall. RSVP online at bit.ly/AlohaBrandon or call the Church office (808-440-3004) by November 5th.

The next Council meeting is the traditional joint November-December meeting to be held on December 8th.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact the council by emailing your thoughts to council@CentralUnionChurch.org.

Please be in prayer for, and support with encouragement, your Council and all of the lay leaders of Central Union Church.

CUC Participates in Honolulu Pride Parade



On October 15, we took the message of "Love Never Fails" out into the streets of Waikiki for the Honolulu Pride Parade. We partnered with our sister church, United Church of Christ Judd Street, and joined in the company of many other faith communities, local businesses, and organizations to support and celebrate our LGBTQIA siblings during LGBT History Month. It was a joyous time!



Welcome, Choral Scholars!

Margaret Lloyd, *Director of Music Ministries*

Initiated in 2021 by our ministry of music, the Choral Scholars Program of Central Union Church is designed to support and enrich our choral ministry. As a part of CUC's outreach to our greater community, it engages a new generation of talented musicians in the life of a faith-based community.

The program has provided four college-age students the opportunity to sing in our choral ensembles during the academic year (October - April). The Choral Scholar positions are awarded to students involved with a local music department, following a successful audition. A modest stipend, as approved by the Music Committee, is offered to support their musical education and may be renewed. Choral Scholars serve with our Soloists as section leaders in the Chancel Choir and in concert choirs preparing major choral works such as Handel's Messiah under the direction of Rebecca Chock, *Director of Choirs*. They also sing with the Soloists in the auditioned ensemble, Ke Aloha Pau 'Ole.

This Fall, we have two returning Choral Scholars who served during the 2021-2022 season: Monique Luckett and Thomas Goedecke. We also have two new Choral Scholars: Nadia Pagdilao and Charles Lonborg. All are currently enrolled at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Join the Music Ministries department in welcoming our Choral Scholars as they explore with us the sacred repertoire of church music and music leadership in a supportive and nurturing environment that is our Central Union Church 'ohana!



Nadia Pagdilao
soprano
BA Student,
Hawaiian Music



Monique Luckett
alto
BEEd Student,
Music



Charles Lonborg
tenor
BS Student, Physics
& Minor in Music



Thomas Goedecke
bass
PhD Candidate,
Music Composition

Fall Fun for Central Union Preschool

Veronique Braithwaite, *Central Union Preschool Director*

The month of October saw the return of two Preschool events held in person! Both the Pumpkin Patch and Trunk or Treat events, sponsored by Central Union Church Preschool Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), were celebrated with fall flair, fun, families and friends.

Children had the opportunity to visit the “patch” and select their very own pumpkin. The Trunk or Treat event, which has grown and moved to The Great Lawn to accommodate the increased family participation, had 50 trunks with various themes and decor on CUC’s Great Lawn. A fun time was had by all!



Apply for CUPS!

Applications for the 2023-2024 school year are now being accepted for the Preschool program (3-5 years old) through November 30th. Any interested families are encouraged to visit Central Union Church Preschool website and download an application form.



Please call the Preschool Office (808-946-4025) if you're interested in scheduling a tour.

www.centralunionpreschool.org

Serving Aloha Celebrates Second Anniversary

Martha Balkin, *Community Ministry*

Serving Aloha was born during the pandemic as a way to address increased food insecurity on our island. Although the pandemic has somewhat abated, food insecurity has not. On October 19, Serving Aloha celebrated its second birthday! In the two years we have been Serving Aloha (every Wednesday since October 2020), we have registered over 2,600 households and now average serving close to 600 per week. We have had over 250 volunteers participate, and that number is probably closer to 300, as those are just the ones with email addresses. We routinely average between 50 to 60 volunteers each week. It is a massive undertaking, but together we have risen to the challenge! Not only that, our volunteers do so with smiles on their faces and kind words from their hearts, showing care and compassion to the many who come for food.



Let's REACH in 2023!

Alexa Zen, *Stewardship Co-Chair*

As this year's stewardship campaign draws to an end, we encourage you to continue to REACH out in all the ways you do. Consider a tree, reaching its branches toward the sky, while simultaneously reaching its roots into the earth. Maybe the tree loses some of its branches, whether from a windstorm or from being pruned. Does the tree die? No, it simply grows new branches. Its tap root remains firm, while it establishes secondary and tertiary roots deeper into the earth. A tree never stops reaching, because it continues to reach, indefinitely, in every direction. Just like the growing tree, submitting your Estimate of Giving card is only one contribution, among your many unique and valuable contributions, to Central Union Church. Mahalo nui for all that you do.

Your pledge greatly helps our church to plan well and live within our means. You may submit an Estimate of Giving card at an in-person service, by mail, or via an [online form](https://centralunionchurch.org/stewardship) that can be found at centralunionchurch.org/stewardship.

MAHALOS

Mahalo nui to everyone who went to Foodland this past September and participated in the annual Give Aloha program! Central Union Church received a total gift of \$5,841.20 (\$4,639 donated, \$1,202.20 matched). Central Union Preschool received a total gift of \$3,274.52 (\$2,600 donated, \$674.52 matched).



Mahalo piha to Maureen Farineau who generously donated four floral vases to the Central Union Church Flower Committee. Maureen gave us a large multi-colored cylindrical vase, two blue and white cylindrical vases, and one black flat rectangular vase. The Flower Committee, headed by Dona Hanaïke, tells us they are excited about the possibilities of arranging flowers in these lovely vases. Thank you, Maureen!

Remembering Our Saints

Please hold the family of **Jane Wylie**, who died on September 18, 2022, in your prayers. Services are pending.

In honor of All Saints' Day, we remember all our beloved church members who died in the past year.

November 2021: Shana Giron, James Richards, John Stepulis

December 2021: Carl Lehman, Priscilla Kesi-Tiumalu, Gale Smith

January 2022: Ann Simpson, Helen Paris, Lucille "Tapps" Pratt, Juanita Wo, Elsie Tuttle, Myron Nakata

February 2022: Diane Peters, Patsy Kai, Joan Pratt

March 2022: Harriet Rotz

April 2022: Marian Benham

May 2022: Eleanor Wentworth, Carla "Pua" Fabella, June Anderson, Judith Cochran

June 2022: Louise Knowlton, Mary Cooke

July 2022: Anna Goo

August 2022: Linda Kidani

September 2022: Elizabeth Etse, Jane Wylie, James Case, Walter Powers

October 2022: none



Poinsettias for Christmas

The Flower Committee will distribute poinsettias among our various worship spaces in time for Christmas! If you'd like to donate and dedicate a poinsettia, please submit the following information with a check made payable to "**CENTRAL**

UNION CHURCH" with "**Poinsettias**" in the memo line. You may mail or bring checks to the church office by **Monday, December 19**, to be listed in the Christmas Eve and Day bulletins.

Poinsettias - \$10 each

Please print legibly.

Name (Donor): _____ Number of Plants: _____

☐ To the Glory of Christmas!

☐ In honor of _____

☐ In loving memory of _____