



The Spire

Photo by Kristen Young

Central Union Church and Preschool
"We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ!"

February 2023
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We, Too, Are Bearers of Light

Rev. Dr. Dave Smazik, Associate Minister

Our transition from the Christmas season is ebbing. During this transition in the life of the church, we often read and hear words from

the first chapter of John's gospel: the Light has come! We have celebrated, and are reminded to continue to celebrate, its presence among us.

As Pastor Mary led us in our celebration of Epiphany a few weeks ago, we were reminded that a light the magi were willing to follow is what guided them to the Christ child. Now, as we begin to follow Jesus' first steps into his ministry, we are reminded that we, too, are bearers of light. Jesus tells his followers to not hide their light, whether it be under a basket, under a bed, or in a secret place...or in a myriad of other ways we conjure up to keep it hid. As the light of God is reflected in and through us, we can live with hopeful anticipation of what the brilliance of that light can mean for 2023.

The Gospel of John also informs our understanding of the 'wattage' of that light:

"From his [Jesus'] fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" (John 1:16). Grace is a source of illumination for our souls as we experience the lingering darkness of the pandemic, the numerous transitions within Central Union Church, and the personal challenges we encounter. Grace is a gift. It is a gift without discrimination. A gift without restriction. A gift that needs expression. A gift that keeps on giving. A gift which multiplies when shared. As we allow the gift of grace to infiltrate the dark crevices in our lives, it will illuminate the way forward for each of us individually and as a church community.

Our recent darkened journeys may have drained us, possibly to the point of emptiness and exhaustion. We crave light for our paths. We crave grace. A willingness to acknowledge the gift of grace for ourselves, and encourage one another in the giving and receiving of it, will open us to the possibilities that lie ahead for Central Union Church to reflect the light of God within us. In doing so, we will magnify the brilliance of God's presence, sustained by the overflowing fullness of Christ.

As the light of God is reflected in and through us, we can live with hopeful anticipation of what the brilliance of that light can mean for 2023.

Message from our Church Council Chair

“When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’” (Luke 24:30-32)



A big mahalo to all who attended (in person, via Zoom, or via telephone) the Annual Budget Meeting and Vision Team Presentation this past Sunday, January 29, 2023. It was wonderful to see so many of you make time to participate in the life of Central Union Church. We learned of the challenges we face, but we also learned that, collectively, we have the ability and the resources to meet those challenges so long as we seek to walk faithfully with God. On Sunday, we started on our road to Emmaus—it is a “road trip” we invite the entire congregation to join.



If you have ever gone on a road trip, you know it is a journey of discovery regardless of whether you are traveling a thousand miles on the mainland or just a trip around the island of O‘ahu. No matter how well you plan your trip before leaving, something new or unexpected inevitably arises before you get to your destination that requires you and your fellow travelers to make choices about how to proceed. Sometimes you will agree and sometimes you will not, but it is important to engage all in the discussion so that whatever the group decides, each person will feel they have been heard and

that they can live with the decision even if it was not their choice. Sometimes the most exciting discoveries on a road trip are not the new sites and places you visit but what you learn and discover about yourself.

One of my favorite thought pieces comes from the Greek philosopher Heraclitus who said, “No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it is not the same river and he is not the same man.” I think most of us will agree we are not the same person we were thirty years ago, or ten years ago, or even one year ago. Hopefully, we have grown and are continuing to grow both spiritually and emotionally with the march of time. Similarly, I think most of us will agree the “world” in which we live is also changing around us – it is not the same world we knew as a child, or as an adult or in our later years. And just as we all are changing on a personal level, while at the same time living in an ever-changing world, so, too, is Central Union Church. Despite its rich and treasured history, we know that Central Union Church is not the same church it was forty years ago, or twenty years ago, or even just before the pandemic. Nor should it be the same; instead, it needs to be a church for the world in which it exists now and for the world that is to come. It needs to be a church that can speak to the people as the people change. To have such a church, we need to accept that change is happening within us and all around us.

Should you have any questions or comments for me, please email me and I will reply as soon as I can. (council@centralunionchurch.org)

Mahalo,
Carl Schlack
Council Chair

What is Our Calling?

A Message from the Vision Team

Early in our Vision Team study, we asked, “What does it mean to be a member of Central Union Church?” Each of us answered the question with different words but a common thought emerged

“Covenant” was our answer. The members of Central Union Church have made a commitment to God, to Central Union Church and to each other. This covenant is expressed by our love, trust, caring and respect. By attending church, by faithful stewardship, by participating in the work of the Church, we make our covenant come to life.

On March 5, 2023, we will meet to decide the future of Central Union Church. After much study and discernment, the Vision Team has concluded that the most promising and viable plan for the long term is to redevelop parts of our church’s significant land holdings. This will ensure the future financial viability of Central Union Church and the fulfillment of our mission to serve our island community for decades to come. In the coming weeks, the Vision Team will curate a conversation about the future of our beloved Central Union Church. There will be informational meetings throughout the month of February as well as informational pieces being transmitted to all church members via email, mail, and our website. All views will be honored and respected. Please bring your questions, thoughts, and ideas. And please pray for discernment and unity as we move forward into these discussions as a congregation.

Please pray for our Church.

Vision Team: *Martha Balkin, Don Clifford,
Dona Hanaike, Greg Sato, Carl Schlack, David Yee*

Read more (online) about **membership** and
covenant in the United Church of Christ:
ucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/a8.pdf



Informational Meetings

February 2

Thursday at 5 PM
Parish Hall

February 7

Tuesday at 12 PM
Women’s Building

February 12

Sunday at 10 AM
Women’s Building

February 18

Saturday at 10 AM
Via Zoom

February 19

Sunday at 11 AM
Windward Campus

February 26

Reflection and Prayer

Welcoming the Lunar New Year



Central Union Preschool students celebrated the Lunar New Year with a traditional Chinese lion dance on January 18th. In Chinese culture, 2023 is the Year of the Rabbit, which is a symbol of longevity, peace, and prosperity. {Years of the Rabbit include 2023, 2011, 1999, 1987, 1975, 1963, 1951, 1939, 1927...}



Celebrating Our 50+ Year Members



On **Sunday, January 22nd**, we honored our members who have shown their faithfulness and commitment to Central Union Church for over half a century! Because of people like these and their sharing of time, energy, and gifts over the years, we are able to gather as one 'ohana today.

<u>1942</u> Elsbeth "Eppy" Kerr	<u>1951</u> Susan Marcotte	<u>1957</u> L.D. Cabral Peter Drewliner Sally Flinn Karen Porteus Kay Sinovic	<u>1961</u> Elizabeth Berg Janice Chun Wai Ling Lum Michael Pietsch Peggy Anne Siegmund	<u>1964</u> Harry Au Hatsue Au Norman Chong Patricia Chong Ellen Desruisseaux Kay Hancock Bruce Kim Carol Kim James Lyman Sada Okumura Nancy Shaw John Wills
<u>1943</u> Joanne Loomis	<u>1952</u> Amy Hayashi-Hirano Glenda Lau	<u>1958</u> Patricia Hong Thomas Kling Carol Ouchi Dave Pietsch Jr. Corwith Roache Ruth Willenborg	<u>1962</u> Donald Huff Hope Lee Heather Macgregor	<u>1965</u> Jon Richard Allen Claire Engle Raymond Engle Linn Garcia Michele Hamada Charlotte Martinson Nicholas Nagel Barbara Osborn James Pietsch Virgil Rewick
<u>1945</u> Authur Wriston, Jr.	<u>1953</u> Esterae Hagen Ralph Johnson, Jr. Tan Tek Lum	<u>1959</u> Mary-Laura "Pixie" St. Denis Janice Wakamatsu	<u>1963</u> Eleanore Chong Mary Greenwell Karen Loomis Elizabeth Rewick Hayden B. Tibbetts, Jr. Janice Trubitt Margaret Wailehua Robert Wiemer	
<u>1946</u> G. Manning Richards	<u>1955</u> Theodore Awaya Sylvia Berrington Geraldine "Gerry" Ching Julia Ing Ann Wayne R. Paul Won, Jr.	<u>1960</u> Ernest Akau Linda Katsuki Daniel Lyman Susan Victor		
<u>1947</u> Ella Miyashiro				
<u>1948</u> Bernadette Kidder Jo-Anne Lukzen Joan Martin Rodby Christopher "Kit" Smith				
<u>1950</u> Leatrice Fung Mary Shattuck Maureen Shimabuku	<u>1956</u> Caroline Lehman Jane Nagel Alexandra Tateyama			

1966

Kay Allen
 Frederica Heady
 Louise Ing
 Marion Lyman-
 Mersereau
 Edwin Peterson
 Laura Van Lier
 Ribbink
 Kathleen Yoshinaga

1967

Gary Baker
 Laura Baker
 Laura Chong
 Cynthia Davis
 Susan Johnson
 Anita Racuya
 Carl Racuya

Rose Shigemura
 Thomas Shigemura
 Eleanor Wong
 Susan Wong

1968

Lois Bruce
 Suzanne Case
 Margaret Cooling
 Susie Field
 Diane Fujikami
 Maurice Lee
 Sarah Nordwall
 Kenneth Rewick
 Nancy Rodney
 Robert Rodney
 Gregory Sato
 Sandra Toorinjian
 Maura Yee

1969

Evelyn Black
 Christine Joy Chong-
 Stannard
 Cynthia Goto
 Kathryn Hallman
 Nyle Hallman
 Randall Hiu
 Karen Lee
 Miki Okumura
 Laurita "Vonnice"
 Turner
 Daniel Tuttle III
 Jean Yokoyama-
 McDonald
1970
 Anita DiMauro
 Anne Irons-Palma

Remedios Sonson
 Samuel P. Sonson
 Merle Stetser
 Lynn Tanoue

1971

Bonnie Andrew
 David Andrew
 James Bell Sr.
 Mary Ann Bell
 Norman Ching
 Catherine Goto
 Frank Gruver
 Lynda Gruver
 Deanna Helber
 Harlan Hirano
 Doris Ito
 Mary Ellen Nordyke-
 Grace

Kathleen Sanchez
 Andre Tatibouet
 Jane Tatibouet

1972

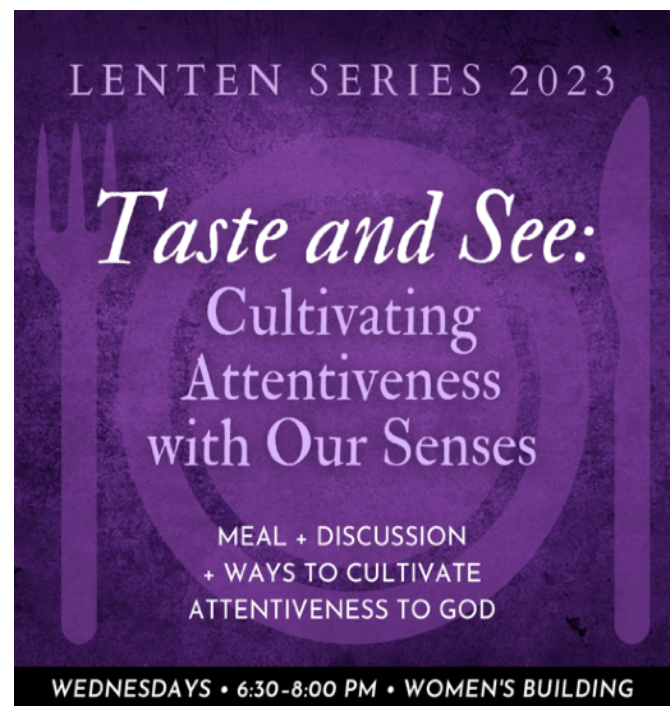
Betsy Del Fierro
 Margaret Kawasaki
 Louise Kefferd
 Ching
 Roy King Jr.
 Russell Lee
 Dennis Park
 Susan Park
 Liane Rosen
 Eric Smith
 Marjorie Smith
 Betty White
 Emmet White Jr.

Mahalo for your faithfulness!

Lent with Central Union Church

Lent is a season of reflection, repentance, and preparation as we prepare for the new life celebrated on Easter Sunday. In our busy culture, the Lenten season is a gift. It offers us a time to slow down, breathe deep, and focus on our spiritual practices – those habits that draw us nearer to God and help us to sense the Spirit's movement in our lives. After three years of pandemic in our world and much transition in our church, we can all benefit from intentional time to "practice the presence of God," to borrow a phrase from Brother Lawrence.

Beginning on **March 1**, join Pastor Mary and Pastor Dave on **Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8:00 PM in the Women's Building (Honolulu campus)**! We will share a simple meal with discussion and some tangible exercises to help us cultivate attentiveness to God. All are welcome! Each week's gathering will stand alone, so come whenever you are able.



Remembering Our Saints

Please hold the family of **Patsy Izumo**, who died on December 21, 2022, in your prayers. Services were held in the Sanctuary on January 5, 2023.

Please also hold in prayer the family and friends of **Arnold "Arne" Phillips**, who died on January 27, 2023. Services are pending.



Save Your Stamps!

Carol Miura, *Women's Board of Missions for the Pacific Islands*

Calling all stamp donors!

Please save your new or used U.S. and foreign stamps. Due to the exorbitant cost of postage to Germany (\$86+) the Women's Board of Missions stamp project is now sending its stamp contributions to Stamps For The Wounded in the Washington, D.C. area (\$17+). The recovering service personnel use the stamps as part of their therapy. Please continue to save your stamps with generous paper margins and include any stamp collecting supplies. Any contributions may be marked "**Attention: Carol Miura**" and dropped off at the church office reception desk. Thank you!



Flower Committee

The Flower Committee could use your help!

If you have a knack for arranging flowers or would like to learn how the church floral arrangements are done, the Flower Committee happily welcomes you!

For more information, feel free to contact Dona Hanaïke (dona.hanaïke@gmail.com).



Children & Youth

The **nursery** is open once again to serve families with childcare for children from birth to age 3 during our 9 & 11 AM Sunday worship services! Sunday School continues for **children** (ages 3 to grade 5) during the 9 and 11 AM worship services.

Our **youth** (grades 6-12) have started an exciting new series watching and discussing *The Chosen*. They are preparing for a youth retreat to Kaua'i in the Summer starting with raising funds through the Punahou parking event on February 3-4.

Lent Begins

Ash Wednesday marks the onset of Lent, the 40-day period of fasting and abstinence in the Christian tradition. It is also known as the 'Day of Ashes' because on this day, the church invites all to have their foreheads marked with ashes in the shape of a cross as a sign of humility and mortality; and as a sign of sorrow and remorse for the pain we've experienced and the wounds we've caused.



COMING UP:

Ash Wednesday Service

with Imposition of Ashes
February 22, 2023, 6:30 PM
Atherton Memorial Chapel