

# *The Spire*



Central Union Church and Preschool

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

May 2023

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## Step Up, Step Out!

Aloha friends,

Together we share an incredibly rich tradition of ministry and mission here at Central Union Church. Throughout our church's history, members have joined together in decision-making and support of this beloved community. Today we stand on their shoulders as we find ourselves at a critical juncture.

Lots of exciting things are happening! The search for our next Senior Minister is progressing with anticipation of exciting news in the next few months. The congregation recently voted to investigate thoughtful re-development of Central Union's properties to ensure ministry and mission for generations to come. The decision to shift our fiscal year to begin in August will now coordinate with the preschool's and church's program year. The Council has also chosen to place focus on the ministry areas of **Faith Formation** and **Welcome and Engagement** as we work to strengthen our life together.

We are doing life together in this unique moment in time. Today we have the opportunity to stand together, to Step Up and Step Out, as we move into the future. Today we not only stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us, but we can provide a place for the generations that come after us to stand firm.



Throughout the month of May, we will reflect on how our six values (Discovery/Kaunānā, Transformation/Loli'ana, Faithfulness/Mana'o'i'o, Justice/Kaulike, Love/Aloha, Care/Mālama) call us to Step Up and Step Out. We will be invited to pray about how we may individually participate in furthering our church's ministry.

May we each Step Up and Step Out and pray for our beloved congregation, trusting that the One who has begun a good work in us will bring it to completion. Love Never Faileth!

Together in Ministry,

**Rev. Mary Herbig,**  
*Minister of Congregational Life & Care*

**Rev. Dr. Dave Smazik,**  
*Bridge Minister*

**Greg Sato,**  
*Vice-Chair Church Council*



## Aloha from the Smaziks

**Rev. Dr. David Smazik,** *Bridge Minister*

Ann and I have so appreciated this time of having our "feet on the ground" in Honolulu, worshipping and serving together with this family of faith. Your warm embrace, generosity and gracious spirit provided us with an immediate sense we were part of Central Union's 'ohana. I look forward to staying connected with the church as I continue to assist part-time with various responsibilities from afar. Please accept our gratitude from the bottom of our hearts. Mahalo!





## News from the April 27th Council Meeting

**Carl Schlack, Council Chair** ([council-chair@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:council-chair@centralunionchurch.org))

Aloha, Central Union Church! Allow me to share some highlights from our last Council meeting for the Council Year 2022-2023 held on April 27, 2023.

**Aloha to Council Members Sam Failla and Mary Calantoc.** Since it was our last Council meeting for the Council Year, we bid aloha to Sam Failla, whose term has ended, and to Mary Calantoc, who will be relocating to the mainland. We thanked them for their many contributions to the Council and for their service to Central Union Church. Although they will be missed on the Council, we know Sam will continue his service on various church committees, and Mary will stay in touch with us from the mainland.

**Recovery of Insurance Deductible.** The Council thanked Miguel Asuncion for his diligent efforts in recovering the \$10,000 deductible paid by CUC under its insurance policy in connection with the damage to our Windward campus back in August 2022 caused by an accident involving a Honolulu police car. Fortunately, no one was hurt in the accident.

**Personnel and Pastoral Relations Committee.** Nathan Wong, chairperson of the Personnel and Pastoral Relations Committee (PPRC), reported that a candidate who was interviewed for the vacant Comptroller position has been offered the job. More information will be shared in an upcoming edition of *The Spire* and *CU Weekly*!

**Central Union Preschool.** Final preparations for the upcoming “Dazzle” fundraiser were discussed by Preschool Director, Veronique Braithwaite, and all were encouraged to attend. (Chair’s note: the “Dazzle” fundraiser was held on Friday, April 29, 2023, the day after our Council meeting, in Atherton Courtyard, the Preschool campus, and the Parish Hall. It was a fabulous and well-attended event under a beautiful, clear night sky, with lots of delicious food. Many thanks to Veronique, the Dazzle committee, and staff members for making it a successful event.)

**Step Up, Step Out Campaign.** Pastor Mary, Pastor Dave, Greg Sato, and Kristen Young have been working on a “Step Up, Step Out” campaign that seeks to generate greater participation from CUC members in the life of our church. A kickoff event is being planned for May 11, 2023, for ministry and financial leaders.

**Pastor Dave.** It was announced that although Pastor Dave Smazik and his wife Ann will be returning to the mainland on May 8, 2023, Pastor Dave will continue to assist Pastor Mary and serve Central Union Church on a remote, part-time basis for the next few months while the Senior Minister Search Committee continues to work toward identifying the Senior Minister candidate that it will recommend to the Church Council. Although it is not time to say aloha for good to Pastor Dave just yet, the Council thanked him for his time among us.

**Annual Congregational Meeting.** The Council discussed preparations for the Annual Meeting of our Congregation to be held on **Sunday, May 21, 2023, in the Parish Hall at 11 AM**, for the purpose of approving the Minutes of the May 1, 2022 Annual Meeting, the January 29, 2023 Annual Budget Meeting, and the March 5, 2023 Special Meeting; electing new members and officers of the Council; receiving reports from the Chair of the Council, the Treasurer of the Council, and our Minister of Congregational Life and Care; and voting on an Amendment to Bylaws Section 3.2 to change the date by which the Annual Budget Meeting must be held each year from “on or before the last day of January” to “on or before the last day of August.” Committee and ministry chairs were also reminded to complete their annual reports which will be compiled into the larger CUC Annual Report.

I look forward to seeing everyone (either in person or via Zoom) at our Annual Congregational Meeting. Mahalo! —Carl

## Meet Our Council Nominees

This year's Annual Budget Meeting of the congregation in January and the Vision Team's following presentations brought home to many CUC members the need for greater involvement in the life of our church and its ministries. Not surprisingly, the result was a larger number of members than usual who put their name forward in nomination for a position on the Council. While the increased level of interest was a blessing, it presented a challenge for the Nominations and Governance Committee since there were many more well-qualified candidates than positions available. In its deliberations, the Committee worked to balance the needs of the Council with having the Council represent the diversity of our congregation.

The following church members have been nominated to serve on the 2023-2024 Church Council. At our Annual Meeting on May 21, 2023, we will elect new members and officers of the Council.

### Secretary (2-year term)



**Sarah Nam** and her husband, Gordon Liao, recently became members of Central Union Church and both were already actively engaged in the life of our Church. Sarah is a health technology professional who most recently served as the Head of Google Health Strategy at Google, as well as an Associate Partner at McKinsey and Company. She also previously served as a Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister's office in Ethiopia as part of the Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative. Sarah holds an AB from Harvard College, an MBA from Harvard Business School, and an MPP from Harvard Kennedy School. Sarah has been filling the position of Council Secretary since Reem Bassous transitioned out of the role at the beginning of the year.

### “At Large” Council Member for the Class of 2024 (1-year term)



**Melveen Chun** was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawai'i and grew up in the Kapahulu area. A graduate of the University of Hawai'i with a bachelor's degree in Nursing, Melveen has worked as a Registered Nurse at a local hospital in Aiea for the past 20 years and truly enjoys helping people. Melveen's 'ohana consists of her spouse, Mae Acio, and they are proud parents to their 4 year-old son, Mateo Acio-Chun, who has attended Central Union Preschool for the past two years. Melveen and her spouse have been congregants of Central Union Church for over five years now.

“We are especially thankful and appreciative of the supportive, inclusive, and caring environment Central Union Church and its congregants consistently strive to provide to everyone.”

## **“At Large” Council Members for the Class of 2026 (3-year terms)**

**Carol M. Egan**, Esq. is an Attorney, licensed in Hawai‘i and Illinois, as well as a Real Estate Broker. She teaches Real Estate Continuing Education classes, Real Estate Prelicense courses, and provides services as an Expert Witness in Real Estate. Additionally, Carol is an Arbitrator for FINRA (Financial Industry Regulatory Authority.) Carol has an adult daughter who lives in California with her family, which includes her 5-year-old grandson.

“We are at an important time in the history of Central Union Church. In serving as a member of the Church Council I pray for guidance, patience and flexibility and will utilize my professional expertise developed over many years.”



**Jane Fyrberg**, M.D. has been a resident of Mānoa Valley for over 55 years. She and her husband of 52 years have six children, five of whom attended Central Union Preschool, and all of whom sang in the CUC Youth Choir. Jane became a member of Central Union Church in 1976 and she has taught Sunday School, served as a member of the Youth Ministry, and chaperoned various youth trips over the years. Jane is an emergency physician and worked for 27 years in the Emergency Department of Kaiser. She also did home deliveries for many years in her private practice. For fun, Jane plays the fiddle in the *Blue Grass Shack Band* and they perform at places like the VA, open markets, and retirement homes.

“I adore everything about Central Union—the history, every blade of grass, tree, and every square inch of our chapel, preschool, and main sanctuary. This church has supported our family through all kinds of illnesses and hard times and through all joyful times. I know hard work lies ahead to fully support our church and make decisions that are the best for all. I am prepared to put in the time and work required to be a contributing member of the Church Council.”



**Maurina Ludwig** was born in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

She moved to Hawai‘i in 1990 and grew up in Pālolo Valley. Maurina has an associate’s degree from Honolulu Community College and has a bachelor’s degree in the Early Childhood/Human Services field from Wayland Baptist University. She has worked as a teacher at HCAP (Honolulu Community Action Program) Head Start for the past 23 years. She and her spouse, Mark Ludwig, have been part of Central Union Church for over 20 years and they have 3 adult children and 2 grandchildren. Maurina is active in the Pohnpei Ministry, sings in the Pohnpei Ministry Choir and Quartet, serves on the diaconate, and helps the Youth Ministry and in whatever’s needed!





## CUPS on the Go....

**Shelly Taira**, *Assistant Preschool Director*

What a blessing it has been for the Central Union Preschool keiki to finally have the opportunity to experience field trips again. Field trips in natural environments are an exciting and educational way for children to gain new knowledge. The world makes more sense when you connect the lessons in the classrooms with real-life experiences.

Do you know what a Genki Ball is? Well, the students from Room 8 can tell you! With help from the Genki Ala Wai Project, the students learned about how dirty the water in the Ala Wai is and how the Genki Balls are beginning to make the water clean so that people can swim and catch fish in the canal again, like a long time ago. The students made Genki Balls in class and had the opportunity to throw them into the Ala Wai. Thank you to Pastor Mary for blessing the Genki Balls.



The keiki in Room 10 enjoyed a beautiful sunny day at Hanauma Bay. They learned about the coral reef, the creatures that live there and water safety. What better way to learn about sea creatures than experiencing them in their own habitat.

Our Room 6 class ended the month of April by working in a lo'i kalo. They stepped into the lo'i, the taro wet paddies, feeling the soft mud under their feet and waded through rows of mounds of kalo.





## Keiki Corner

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

Happy Easter! Did you know that Eastertide is seven weeks long, beginning on Easter Sunday and ending on Pentecost? On Easter morning, our keiki gathered in Sunday school to retell the story of Jesus' resurrection. In between worship services, we enjoyed the showers of blessings (and rain!) during our annual Easter Egg Hunt.



During Eastertide in our Godly Play Sunday School, our keiki have been exploring stories about Knowing Jesus in a New Way. Our stories started at the tomb on Easter Sunday and will conclude with the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and we will learn how the disciples learned to know Jesus in His absence, in the breaking of bread, in their doubt, in the morning on the beach, in making Jesus known to others, in waiting, and by the Holy Spirit. You can find these stories in the Bible at the end of the Gospels and in Luke 1 & 2. Or ask a Godly Play storyteller to share with you! Children's Ministry is also looking forward to new Godly Play stories in Sunday School, beach day get-togethers, our Compassion Camp week-long summer program (July 24-28), and more!

## Youth Updates

**Melissa Thach**, *Youth Director*

April was a month filled with service for CU Youth! On Easter Sunday we helped hide eggs and give out goody bags in the pouring rain. On April 15th we went to the community workday at Ho'ōla Hou iā Kalauao. We had fun and got really muddy in the lo'i helping prep some areas for taro planting. On April 23rd, we participated in the Walk for Water to Shut Down Red Hill at Ala Moana Beach Park. All of these activities count toward the service hours required for youth to attend our Kōkua Kaua'i trip this July. We have a great group of youth who love to serve together!





# Open for God's Business

## Buildings and Grounds Committee

Members of the CUC Buildings and Grounds Committee felt that the old signs facing outward along Beretania and Punahou Streets gave a poor impression to the thousands of cars that drive past our beloved Central Union Church campus daily. The old, worn-out signs gave passersby the impression that we were not open for God's business.

Committee members found a local company that could replace and upgrade the signs in their existing style. Timed LED lights were added to the borders of the signs, new matching letters and messages were placed on the new signboards behind the quarter-inch thick industrial-grade sunblock plexiglass. The existing black metal support frames were sanded, steel brushed, and painted with two coats of black gloss metal paint.

These new signs improve the curb appeal and shout, "CUC is open for God's business," to those who pass by!



**Attend the Annual Congregational Meeting**  
on Sunday, May 21, 2023 at 11 AM  
in the Parish Hall or online by Zoom!

## Remembering Our Saints

Please hold the family of **Laurita "Vonnie" Turner**, who died on April 17, 2023, in your prayers during this time of mourning. Services are pending.



Note: June 2023's publication of *The Spire* will come out on June 8, the second Thursday rather than the first Thursday of the month. As usual, it will first be published in the *CU Weekly* and on the CUC website, then mailed in the days following to those who've opted to receive a hard copy. Content due June 2.