

Christmas in July!

The Spire



Central Union Church and Preschool

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

August 2023

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Pastor's Page • Leaning Into Transition

Rev. Dr. Dave Smazik, Bridge Minister

It was almost a year ago that Ann and I were moving from Indiana to suburban Chicago, Illinois. Moving into a new area, a new city, would certainly be a major transition but we were

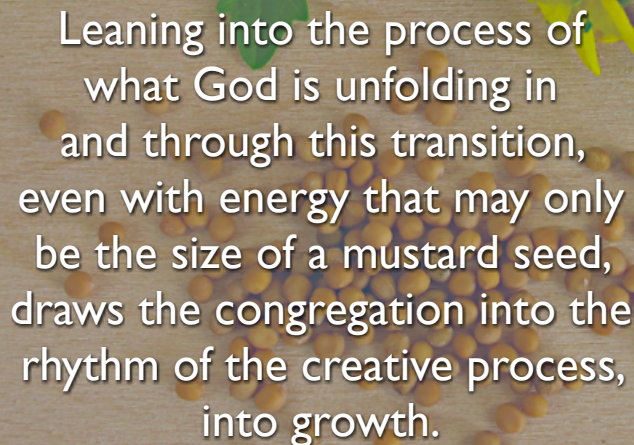
also transitioning from full-time pastoral ministry into retirement. We were not certain what retirement would bring but certainly anticipated a very different rhythm to our lives. One that perhaps would be a bit more predictable, different from the daily commitment of ministering in and alongside a large faith community.

I have previously shared that it was only about one hour into that transitional drive down the interstate that I received a call from Pastor Mary about a short-term opportunity at Central Union. Given the number of unknowns we had been anticipating and the rhythmic variations already playing in our heads, we were not quite prepared for the major change of cadence yet to come! While writing these words, we are anticipating another break in rhythm as I end my time as a ministry assistant with Central Union. However, I am certain that the tempo of our lives will forever be affected because of our time in ministry with the members and staff of CUC. The hospitality, graciousness, and commitment that we experienced has left an indelible mark in our hearts and minds. We are grateful that we leaned into this opportunity during a time of transition.

Central Union Church has been in a period of transition for weeks, months, and even years, to the point that many of you may be experiencing transition fatigue. Navigating a pandemic in the midst of this transition was depleting in every sense of the word. I imagine there is a pervasive desire for the return of a nice, calm, previously known rhythm with the arrival of a new senior pastor. To suggest anything different might strike a sensitive chord among a congregation nearing exhaustion.

However, growth occurs at the point of transition. It becomes the rhythm of our souls, of life. It is the rhythm of creation. The arrival of Pastor Rushan is

only a few weeks away and provides opportunity to lean into this transition. Jesus' reference to seeds in the parables speak to growth possible from the tiniest amount. Leaning into the process of what God is unfolding in and through this transition, even with energy that may only be the size of a mustard seed, draws the congregation into the rhythm of the creative process, into growth.



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Ann and I are excited to see the work of creation continue to unfold at CUC. We will be forever thankful for the growth we experienced in the rich soil of your community. We will keep you in our prayers and be grateful for all God has in store for you in the weeks, months, and years to come.

Mahalo, Pastor Dave & Ann!





Update from Council

Carl Schlack, *Church Council Chair*

Aloha Central Union Church!

In the **BC** era (“**Before COVID**”), it was common for the Council to hold a retreat in June, shortly

after a new Council was elected at the Annual Member Meeting in May. Although we decided to reinstate the Council retreat this year, we had to push it back to July due to the number of activities in June related to the visit by our Senior Minister candidate, Pastor Rushan Sinnaduray and his family, and the eventual calling of Pastor Rushan to be our new Senior Minister. On Saturday, July 29, 2023, the Council held its first retreat in years. Its purpose was three-fold: first, to give the Council an opportunity to step back and look at what we do from a wider lens so we can better assess the varying needs of Central Union Church and establish priorities that will enable our work to be more focused and effective; second, to give new and continuing Council members the opportunity to get to know the people they are journeying with in this place and at this time and who they will be working with for the next year or so; and third, to learn or be reminded of Council protocols and policies, and to receive their ministry and committee liaison designations and their projects assignments. Despite the fact that some Council members were unable to attend the retreat due to illness, work demands, and conflicting travel schedules, it was a worthwhile exercise and it served to energize the Council for the work ahead.



Given the proximity of the retreat to our monthly Council meeting for July (scheduled for Thursday, July 27, 2023), it was decided to hold our monthly Council meeting on Saturday morning, immediately before our retreat. Allow me to share some news from our July Council meeting:

- Given the start of our new fiscal year on August 1, 2023, CUC Treasurer, David Yee, assisted by Comptroller, Angie Barboza, presented the Council with the proposed budget for the fiscal year from August 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024, inclusive. The proposed budget, subject to minor adjustments once further information becomes available, was approved by the Council for presentation to the Congregation for consideration

and approval at the upcoming Annual Budget Meeting scheduled for Sunday, August 27, 2023. (Note that the proposed budget will be made available to CUC Members for review in advance of the Annual Budget Meeting.) As a reminder, the prior budget approved by the Congregation earlier this year (on January 29, 2023), was for the 7-month “stub” fiscal year that began on January 1, 2023 and ended on July 31, 2023. This was due to the recent alignment of our Church fiscal year with the Preschool fiscal year. As David Yee explained previously, with the start of the new fiscal year on August 1, 2023, we will be back to a full 12-month fiscal year.

- Given the recent alignment of the Annual Budget Meeting with CUC’s fiscal year, the Council considered whether we also should align the Annual Membership Meeting with the Annual Budget Meeting. Currently, our Bylaws require (1) before the end of August, an Annual Budget Meeting for CUC Members to review and approve the budget for the fiscal year, and (2) before the end of May, an Annual Membership Meeting for CUC Members to elect Council members who are to be elected by CUC Membership and transacting such other business as may properly come before the meeting. After discussion, the Council concluded it would be beneficial to combine the Annual Membership Meeting and the Annual Budget Meeting into a single meeting to be held on or before the last day of September of each year for the purposes of considering and approving the budget for the fiscal year, electing Council members who are to be elected by CUC Membership, and transacting such other business as may properly come before the meeting. The Council believes this change, which will allow for all routine, annual business of CUC to be addressed in a single meeting, is a more comprehensive and efficient way for CUC Members to exercise their reserved rights under our Bylaws. Consequently, the Council will be presenting a proposed Bylaws Amendment to CUC Members for consideration and approval at the Annual Budget Meeting that combines the Annual Membership Meeting and the Annual Budget Meeting into a single meeting as aforesaid. The proposed Bylaws Amendment will be made available to CUC Members for review in advance of the Annual Budget Meeting.

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- **The Real Estate Committee** continues to explore development options and has commenced initial, preliminary discussions with possible development partners. To assist in managing the strategic communications and community outreach functions which will be essential to the success of our development project, the Real Estate Committee has engaged the services of DTL (pronounced “detail”), a company with a proven track record in facilitating high-profile development projects. Before the end of the year, the Real Estate Committee will provide a progress report to the Congregation.
- **Pastor Rushan and his family** have been busy arranging for their journey to Honolulu. Movers have been scheduled to pack and ship their

belongings and their flight to Honolulu has been booked. They arrive on Friday, September 8, 2023. (We still anticipate that Pastor Rushan’s first Sunday in the pulpit will be the last Sunday in September.) Plans are underway to ensure Pastor Rushan and his family receive a warm welcome and to facilitate a smooth transition to their new home. If you wish to assist in showing our aloha, please contact me.

I look forward to seeing everyone (either in person or via Zoom) at our **upcoming Annual Budget Meeting on Sunday, August 27, 2023**. As always, should you need to reach me, you can contact me at council-chair@centralunionchurch.org.

Mahalo,
Carl Schlack

A New Partnership

Martha Balkin, Community Ministry

Central Union’s Community Ministry is working to support the houseless in our community by partnering with River of Life Mission. Last year, River of Life changed their model of feeding the homeless in a central location by instituting “hubs” around the island that would provide meals and other supportive services.



Starting on June 12th, on each Monday evening, volunteers from River of Life set up on the corner of Punahou and Beretania streets to hand out meals and engage with the community. Through building relationships, their intent is to help people on their journey out of homelessness and into a more stable life. Meal distribution is limited to 50 meals served, so that no single location is overwhelmed. Following the distribution, the River of Life volunteers clean and clear the site.



This model, which has been very successful so far, was highlighted in an article entitled “Helping the Homeless” in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser on April 18, 2023. In the article, Mayor Rick Blangiardi acknowledged the efforts addressed through this new model. “The fact is that so many of these people need support,” he said. “They need wrap-around services. ... I support River of Life and their effort to promote their ministry and do the good work that they do.”

Partnering and sharing in this way allows our church to further be a blessing to our community.

River of Life’s Mission: Meeting people in the place of their greatest need, with the hope of sharing Jesus and a **plan** for good living

Celebrating Christmas in July



What a joy it was to celebrate Christmas in July together again this year! The coming of the Christ Child is the core of our faith and a cause for celebration beyond December 25th. So we took some time on July 16th, "In the Bright Midsummer", to celebrate that God loved the world so much that Christ was born! There was a shave ice truck for cool treats, foam play for the keiki, and of course Christmas songs in worship!



Women's League Honors Scholarship Awardees



On July 30th, in a special reception hosted by the Women's League, we had the opportunity to meet eleven of the scholarship recipients, celebrate their accomplishments, and hear about their goals for the future.

Charlene Lorenzo, Women's League

Our Women's League Scholarship Program gives young people the opportunity to further their education. In the past, we provided financial assistance to 12 college-bound students. Currently the Women's League increased it to 23 scholarship recipients who were selected based on their character, scholarship, financial need, and community service. We are proud of our scholarship recipients and wish them much success!

Children's Ministry Hosts Compassion Camp

Cayanna Herrera, Director of Children's Ministries

Since 2021, the last weeks of July have been filled with excitement here in Children's Ministry. This year was no exception with our staff and volunteers hosting our annual Compassion Camp. From July 24-28, we welcomed around 30 children between the ages of 3 and 11 each day and explored our world through our theme

Compassion Camp: What Every Living Thing Needs.

Each day we experienced a Godly Play Story (The Parable of the Good Shepherd, The Parable of the Sower, The Ark and the Flood, The Parable of the Mustard Seed, and The Parable of the Good Samaritan), created crafts, learned new songs, explored the outdoors, and made new friends.

After five days of learning and playing together, we have packed away the last of our camp materials, put away our crafts and snacks, and said so long to Compassion Camp until next year! We hope and pray that next year we will once again come together to fill our hearts to overflow with the love and compassion that God pours out. And until then, we remember what we have learned together, that compassion means "I see your hurt. I feel your hurt. I help ease your hurt," as we do our part to provide What Every Living Thing Needs.



Mahalo to our leaders!

Pictured: Robyn Gerell, Crystal Fredrick, Cayanna Herrera, Dacy Amond, Darla Amond

On August 13, we'll celebrate Keiki Sunday with a Bible Presentation, Backpack Blessing, water play, and Pūpū Potluck for ALL!

Youth Hele On to Kaua'i

Melissa Thach, Youth Director

After months of planning, our youth went to Kaua'i for a weekend of service and connection. My personal goals were (1) not to have to use the first aid kit, and (2) for our group to bond with each other. I'm happy to report we met both of those goals! We had lots of car rides and singalongs, campfires and hikes, sightseeing and picture taking, and a time of service alongside the Kōloa Union Church youth group! There are some incredible youth that call CUC their home—and I'm so thankful we get to be part of their journey.



"I liked the beach cleanup and swimming, and also hanging out with everyone and sightseeing."
— Zoe, 7th grade

"Everyone was kind and I saw so many creatures like chickens and monk seals ... This was the most fun vacation of my life."
— Kaleio (JJ), 7th grade

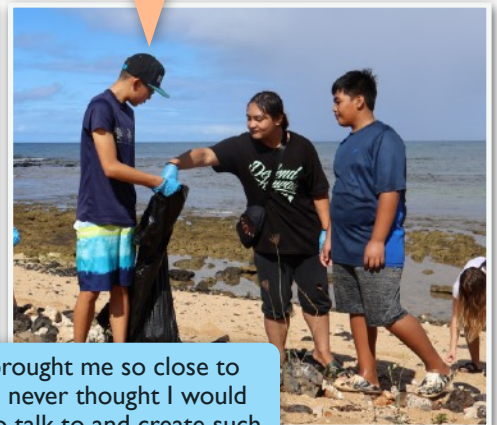
"The best part of this trip was getting to better know the other people in our youth group. I'm very glad I went on this trip and will never forget this experience."
— Andrew, 10th grade



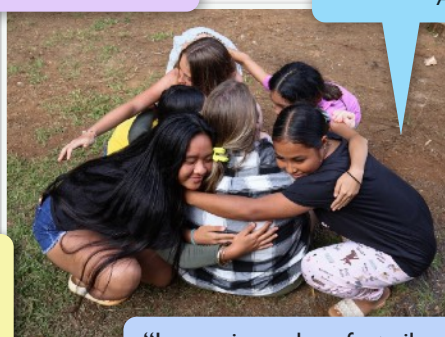
"I got to make new friends, get closer to my fellow youth members, and experience God's creation. The trip as a whole was a great opportunity for the youth and I would love to be able to experience this again!"
— Casey, 10th grade



"God brought me so close to people I never thought I would be able to talk to and create such a brotherly and sisterly bond."
— Angeljoy, 11th grade



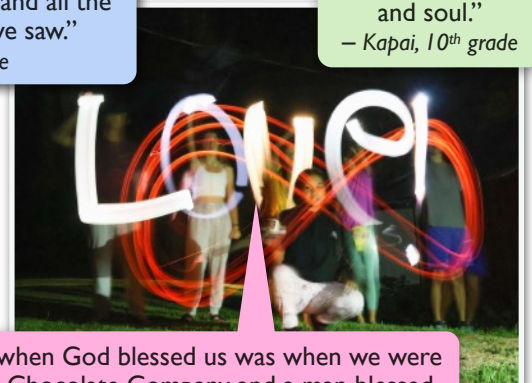
"It was fun how we all became good friends and sang together. The best experience in my opinion was sitting and talking around the fire making s'mores."
— Keenan, 12th grade




"I experienced perfect silence and quiet time and how God created the nature, the breeze, and all the trees and canyons we saw."
— Sohn, 7th grade



"I am grateful that God blessed us with many splendors of beauty, not just sweet to the eyes but also the heart and soul."
— Kapai, 10th grade



"A time when God blessed us was when we were at Kauai Chocolate Company and a man blessed us with \$100 to support our youth group."
— Michaela, 7th grade



Imagining Our Future


Dreaming and Praying for the Future of Central Union Church

FAITH FORMATION CLASS
 Tuesdays, 6-7 PM (August 8, 15, 22, 29)
 Email: cassie-chee@centralunionchurch.org

THIS MONTH

Plan to attend our four-week faith formation class where we will dream together about the future of Central Union Church!

In The Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray's first sermon at CUC titled "[Imagination](#)", he invited us to reflect on our visions for our church and greater community, as well as our fears.



All are invited to participate as we engage scripture, multiple prayer practices, and collective imagination to prepare for the arrival of Pastor Rushan and CUC's future!



Women's Retreat

SAVE THE DATE

T.H.E.


NOVEMBER 3-5, 2023

SAVE THE DATE

Women, plan now to join us for a weekend of relaxation, laughter, and deep connection!

November 3–5, 2023
Friday evening to Sunday noon
Camp Mokule'ia on the North Shore

Online registration will open this month.



Remembering Our Saints

Please pray for the family of **Charles Wayne Benton**, who died on July 24, 2023. Services are being planned on the continent.

