



The Spire

Pastor's Page: "God who sets us on a journey"

Rev. A. Rushan Sinnaduray, Senior Minister



As I write this, my 'ohana are saying our farewells here in Jefferson City, Missouri and are preparing for our move across the ocean to join you in Honolulu. It has been a challenging and busy few months as we have been saying our farewells, downsizing, packing and getting ready to move.

Arushini, Aran, Alisha and I (and our beagle, Henry) are looking forward to moving to Honolulu and getting to know all of you and your families, to hear your stories and to share in your dreams and visions for the very special community of faith that is Central Union. Mahalo for all the time, energy and effort so many of you are expending in preparation to share your aloha with us and to help make us feel welcome in our new home.

The weeks and months ahead are going to bring so many exciting adventures and experiences, some challenges, many learnings and new opportunities. New beginnings and

transitions can often be daunting and a little frightening, but they can also be opportunities for so much more if we just allow the Triune God to do their work. One of the hymns that has guided much of my ministry, and that we sang on the day you voted to call me as your settled Senior Minister, is one written by a New Zealand hymn writer, Joy Dine:

*"God who sets us on a journey
To discover, dream and grow
Lead us as you led your people
In the desert long ago.
Journey inward, journey outward,
Stir the spirit, stretch the mind.
Love for God and self and neighbor
Marks the way that Christ defined."*

These words are such an appropriate prayer for a time of new beginnings such as the one we are in at this moment. We are about to embark on a journey together. We have no idea where the journey will take us and what is in store for us in the months and years ahead. All we can know for certain is that it is God who has called us to journey together and it is God's Holy Spirit who is travelling alongside us and among us into our shared future.

As the hymn says, we are being called on this journey to discover more about ourselves as individuals and as community and to obtain a better understanding of our place in this world. We are being set on this journey to dream and to dream big, to connect with and discover God's dream for each and every one of us. And ultimately we are being set on this journey together to grow in faith, to grow in aloha for ourselves, for each other and for all of creation, to grow as a community and to grow into the fullness of God in every part of our lives.

Blessings and peace,
Pastor Rushan

Welcome, Pastor Rushan!

ABOUT REV. A. RUSHAN SINNADURAY

Rev. A. Rushan Sinnaduray (he/him/his) was born in Sri Lanka, grew up in Aotearoa (New Zealand), and has shared in ministry in a variety of denominations in Aotearoa, Canada, and the United States. Years of experience working in churches as Director of Youth Ministries, Associate Pastor, Senior Pastor, Founding & Lead Pastor have developed strong management, communication, leadership, teaching, and facilitation skills. The places and people he's encountered have broadened his worldview and shaped his perspectives, strengthening his ability to work ecumenically and cross-culturally.

Pastor Rushan is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ (UCC) and comes to us from The Oasis United Church of Christ, the only "Open and Affirming" church in Jefferson City, Missouri. He is involved in our wider church, having served as a member on the UCC Board of Directors and, most recently, as the Assistant Moderator for UCC General Synod 34 in 2023, soon-to-be Moderator for General Synod 35.

At the Special Meeting of the Congregation held on June 25, 2023, the members of Central Union Church voted overwhelmingly (97% in favor) to call Rev. A. Rushan Sinnaduray as our next Senior Minister.

He shares, "I appreciate and value the important legacy of Central Union Church in the life of our denomination. I am excited by the wide variety of ministries and mission undertaken by the church and its willingness to explore new ways of sharing God's love with the world."





Council Chair Update

Aloha Central Union Church!

Our long wait for the arrival of our new Senior Minister, Rev. A. Rushan Sinnaduray, is almost over! On Friday, September 8, 2023, Pastor Rushan and his

family will arrive in Honolulu and take up residence at the Manse. Although their personal household goods won't arrive for a few weeks, Church staff and volunteers have worked to clean the Manse and ensure it has all the necessities to make them comfortable in the interim. Before his first day in the office on Monday, September 18, 2023, Pastor Rushan and his wife, Arushini, will be taking care of family matters such as enrolling their children in school. Son, Aran, will be attending Stevenson Middle School, and daughter, Alisha, will be attending Noelani Elementary School. Despite missing the first few days of the new school year, we are confident Aran and Alisha will catch up quickly! Pastor Rushan's first day in the pulpit will be Sunday, September 24, 2023, but look for him and his family in the pews during Sunday services before then, and if you do see them, please give them a warm welcome to Hawai'i and to our church 'ohana.



This exciting new chapter in the life of Central Union Church under the leadership of Pastor Rushan is starting with a newly approved Budget. The members of CUC met on Sunday August 27, 2023, to approve the Budget for our new fiscal year from August 1, 2023, through July 31, 2024. After hearing Treasurer David Yee's cogent explanation of the budget process and listening to his answers to members' budget questions, the proposed Budget was overwhelmingly approved. Also approved at the meeting was an amendment to our Bylaws that aligned our Annual Membership Meeting with our Annual Budget Meeting. Instead of having an Annual Membership Meeting before the end of May and then an Annual Budget Meeting before the end of August each year, CUC members voted to combine the two meetings into a single Annual Meeting to be held before the last day of September each year at

which CUC members will consider and approve the budget for the fiscal year, elect Council members who are to be elected by CUC membership, and transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting. As a result, our next Annual Membership Meeting will be in September 2024.

Much will be happening over the next few weeks including the rollout of our stewardship campaign so stay tuned for more news about that. In the meantime, allow me to answer some questions that have been asked about certain trees on our Honolulu campus. As many of you know, last year we had to remove a lovely old kiawe tree (located between the Sanctuary and the Women's Building) due to disease and falling branches. We were very fortunate no one was injured when one large branch broke and fell destroying a concrete bench underneath. In the last month, a huge branch from another kiawe tree (the one fronting the Women's Building and the driveway) broke and fell, but our arborist consultants advised us that this and the remaining kiawe tree (the one located near the Thrift Shop and the administration parking lot) can be saved. Both of



these kiawe trees will need to be crowned and certain branches will need to be removed. Our Building and Grounds Committee has scheduled this work for early September. Our arborist consultants also informed us that three of the shower trees located between the Sanctuary and Atherton Memorial Chapel were diseased and so they were removed. We are currently looking at replacement tree options for those shower trees. Many thanks to our dedicated Building and Grounds Committee for their work on this matter.

Should you have any questions or otherwise wish to contact me, please send me an email at council-chair@centralunionchurch.org. Thank you.

Mahalo,
Carl Schlack, *Council Chair*

Kaselehlie (Aloha) from Pohnpei Ministry!

Pohnpei Ministry held their “summer fun” event on August 5 at Magic Island. People gathered for lunch, fellowship, fun, and a fundraiser to support their ministry!



This September, CUC Pohnpei Ministry celebrates their seventh anniversary! Since 2004, worship services conducted in the Pohnpeian language with spoken word and song have been held on our campus, offering an opportunity for the Pohnpeian community to connect culturally, spiritually, and even globally (online). The CUC Pohnpei Ministry became a formal ministry program of our church in 2016, extending the mission and reach of Central Union Church to Pohnpeians in Hawai'i and increasing connections within our CUC 'ohana. The Pohnpei Ministry welcomes your support for their continued outreach and hospitality. If you'd like to make a donation to this vibrant ministry, you can write a check to Central Union Church with “Pohnpei Ministry” in the memo line OR give online at centralunionchurch.org by clicking [GIVE](#) and selecting “Pohnpei Ministry.” Kalahngan! Thank you!



CUPS is back in session!

Shelly Taira, Assistant Preschool Director



Central Union Church Preschool began the first month of the 2023-2024 school year! The sounds of children's laughter and a few short-lived tears have

once again filled the campus grounds. The children are getting to know their new teachers, make new friends and learn the important rules and procedures of their classroom. We are looking forward to another learning-filled and exciting school year!



Applications for the 2024-2025 school year are now being accepted for the Preschool program (3-5 years old) from September 1st through November 30th. Any interested families are encouraged to call the Preschool Office at 808-946-4025.

Keiki Corner

Cayanna Herrera, *Director of Children's Ministries*

As summer drew to a close and a new school year loomed on the horizon, the children of Central Union Church and their families had the opportunity to celebrate with Keiki Sunday on August 13! The day was filled with our keiki serving in the worship service through song and readings, a special children's church worship service, balloons in church, Bible presentations, an all-church potluck, and even fun in the sun with water play! What a fun and exciting way to wrap up the summer and kick off a new school year.



In Godly Play Sunday School, we have entered the green and growing time, the season between Pentecost and Advent, known in some traditions as Ordinary Time. However, in Godly Play, no season is ordinary, and we have been exploring many wonderful stories! We have learned about God's 10 Best Ways, The Good Shepherd and World Communion, The Temple and the Tabernacle, Baptism, the Circle of the Church Year, and Abraham and Sarah. We are excited to begin exploring Creation in the month of September and to continue to flourish in our green and growing time!

CU Youth

Melissa Thach, *Youth Director*



August was abuzz with the sound of everyone going back to school and remembering how to get up early and do homework in the evenings. At the beginning of the month, the youth voted to use some of the funds they



raised at Punahou Parking to gift the 52 teachers of Washington Middle School with some supplies they usually pay for from their own pockets.

We've received a couple phone calls and cards thanking the youth for their thoughtfulness. At the end of the month, we went to Breakout Waikiki for a fun afternoon of team building. We have picked up *The Chosen* season 2 on Sunday mornings and continue growing together as a group.

Nā Wai Chamber Choir

Elizabeth Baker, *Nā Wai Chamber Choir*

Nā Wai Chamber Choir has had a busy summer season! As Central Union Church's ensemble-in-residence, we kick-started our season at our home base. On July 30, we performed a concert, "Makua Laiana", which celebrated the mele of Lorenzo Lyons, as well as other songs about Moku o Keawe (Hawai'i Island). This concert also welcomed the talents of Margaret Lloyd on the organ. We were so grateful to see so many familiar faces (and new ones!) in the audience and are looking forward to the next time we can perform together. Nā Wai also utilized the beautiful sanctuary to host a recording session for an upcoming album project, also entitled *Makua Laiana*, that celebrates the hymns of Lorenzo Lyons. Stay tuned for this in the near future!



Venturing a little farther from home, Nā Wai embarked on our season tour to Hawai'i Island in the first weekend of August. We especially treasured this summer huaka'i to Hawai'i Island as we hold many roots in Hilo, both individually as members and as an ensemble at large. Our community engagement began at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo where we led educators in a workshop on the mele of Queen Lili'uokalani and where Dr. Jace Saplan hosted a choral conducting masterclass. Throughout our time with these educators, we unpacked the ideas of culture in the classroom, how to intentionally set up our rehearsal plans to capitalize on the interconnectedness of our repertoire, and what it means to conduct in a way that is helpful for our ensembles. This learning took place on the backdrop of weaving the life and legacy of

Queen Lili'uokalani—the most prolific Hawaiian composer of all time.



That evening, we headed to the First United Protestant Church of Hilo where we held our first concert. We were even honored with the attendance of Michael Springer himself, as well as many other members of our extended Nā Wai 'ohana. We ended our weekend tour with a trip up to Ka'u to spend time with the community at Kauaha'ao Church, graciously led by Kahu Debbie Wong Yuen. Together in song, we joined them in celebrating their 10 AM service and then offered a concert at noon. We were truly touched by the aloha and generosity of all we met and interacted with.

We offer the deepest mahalo to all who were able to join us for this season's concerts, both here at Central Union and over on Hawai'i Island, and to those who support us from afar. These tours remind us of the importance of the kuleana we have to preserve, propagate, and perpetuate Hawaiian choral music and the joy we find in connecting with our communities and each other. To keep up with our next adventures, be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Until next time, a hui hou!



Q&A with Sarah Young, Director of Choirs



CUC Soloists: Emily Vidler, Ezinne Dawson, Keith Wallace, Christopher Kelsey, with Sarah Young.

The **Chancel Choir** has resumed rehearsals on Thursdays at 6:30 PM in the Music Building. If you love to sing, the Choir would welcome your participation. Join us as we praise God through choral music and share good fellowship with each other!

Contact:

sarah-young@centralunionchurch.org

What are you excited about as the Director of Choirs?

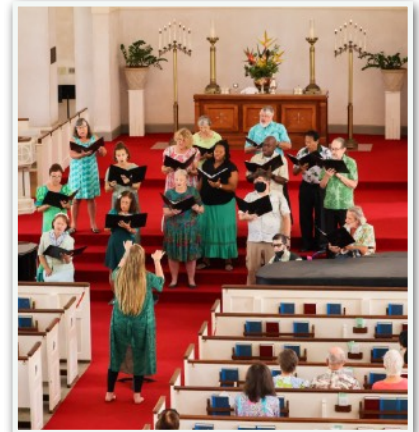
I'm most excited to make music and collaborate with such long standing members of the choir community on O'ahu. I'm most looking forward to connecting tradition to new ideas with projects such as Handel's Messiah i ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i.

What is your vision for CUC choirs?

I envision our ensembles serving the CUC community through song and service whenever possible.

What hopes do you have?

I hope to see CUC choirs grow together in pilina with the surrounding community, in personal faith, and musically as ensembles.



Forming Our Faith through Imagination and Prayer

On four Tuesdays in August, we gathered for our faith formation class, "Imagining Our Future: Dreaming and Praying for the Future of Central Union Church," led by Cassie Chee. Participants collectively engaged scripture and prayer practices in anticipation of Pastor Rushan's arrival and the possibilities ahead for our church. These are a few excerpts from prayers shared by participants:



"As we wait we ask how can Central Union Church speak to the brokenness all around us? As we wait we ask how can we awaken in ourselves the desire to serve others rather than ourselves? As we wait we ask what words and actions of our church (our people) will transform lives?"



"As we wait we ask you to unite us in a common vision as we embark on our journey of change ... Make us open to the holy spirit and the good word."



"I want to welcome those whose story I have not heard. Help me to grow in charity and courage so I might be more hospitable."

"Give our church love, listening hearts, wisdom, courage and energy to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit to evolve church to serve the changing needs and new generations of Christians."

Honolulu Habitat for Humanity Beginnings

Ruth Chang, Church Member

On August 9, five energetic staff members from Honolulu Habitat for Humanity (HHH) came to our busy church campus on a Serving Aloha Wednesday to hear the history of how HHH began through the support of Central Union Church (CUC). Rosemary Eberhardt gave an inspiring tour of our church in the Sanctuary; and Ruth Chang shared HHH's historic records filed in the Church Archives.



Outstanding events shared with the visiting staff: (1) Various projects for fundraising including the Habitat for Humanity Walk, (2) Church member Dougie Hubbard quit her paid job to volunteer as a secretary for HHH, (3) Mānoa Valley Church donated a room for the first HHH Office, (4) Millard and Linda Fuller visited CUC, (5) Rosalyn Carter, First Lady, inaugurated the HHH Chapter, (5) CUC member Fran Brossy financed a Habitat home.

The HHH staff was moved to learn the details of their beginnings and confident that their mission continues to coincide with CUC. TJ Joseph, a native Hawaiian and the CEO of HHH danced a hula expressing gratitude and thanksgiving. The staff of HHH was enthused to renew their association with CUC and will be reconnecting with the Women's League soon.



The spark which founded Honolulu Habitat for Humanity was a book "No More Shacks" by Millard Fuller. CUC member Sally Toyama introduced the book to church members. My husband, Jerry Chang, was so inspired that he flew to Georgia to visit Millard Fuller and President Jimmy Carter, a great supporter of Habitat for Humanity.

After that trip, we presented the idea of starting a Habitat for Humanity here in Honolulu. We received enthusiastic support from Rev. Ted Robinson, the minister at the time, and from the congregation. Within a year, HHH was formally established as a local nonprofit organization.

Please visit their website:
www.honoluluhabitat.org
A donation would help build a home.

Remembering Our Saints

Please pray for the family of **Raymond Paul Won**, who died on July 20, 2023.
Services are set for Saturday, September 16th at 11 AM in the Sanctuary.

