

# *The Spire*



Central Union Church and Preschool

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

October 2023

Vol. 93 - No. 10



# Pastor's Page: Strengthening Our Heartbeats

**Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray, Senior Minister**

I firmly believe that the best years of our church are ahead!

Henry Ford once said, "If you think you can, or you think you can't, you are right."

There is no doubt that how we choose to view the circumstances we find ourselves in will have some kind of bearing on what happens from there. This is one of the reasons why hope is such an important part of our faith. To see hope where others only see despair, to see a future where others may only see endings, to discover life in the midst of death is part of the larger story of our faith. Despite this our faith does not make us immune to negative and toxic feelings that threaten to distort our view or rob us of the blessings God places before us.

It's all about perspective. We need to train faith muscles to see the blessings and opportunities before us. We need to be a people of faith who can think big, be willing to take risks of faith and be open to thinking outside the box. We need to be people who believe that the best is yet to be and we need to embrace that truth and live it.

Which is why I am so excited about our fall stewardship campaign that begins this month on October 8. Our theme will be **In a Heartbeat** and we will be spending time reflecting on some of the core values of Central Union Church. On my first Sunday in the pulpit I preached about the ways in which the beating heart provides a wonderful example of discipleship for our individual and corporate journeys of faith.



During our stewardship campaign I will be challenging us to think in more detail about the things which define us as a church and the ways in which we can help strengthen the heartbeats of Central Union Church through the sharing of the gifts of our time, talent and treasure.

During this month you will receive our stewardship mailing seeking your pledge of support for the year ahead. I hope you will prayerfully consider the ways in which you can use your time, talent and treasure to move this wonderful church community into a new and vibrant future, then complete and return your Estimate of Giving Card.

As we enter into this period of renewal, revitalization and new beginnings in the life of Central Union Church, I hope that you are as excited as I am to see the new things that God will be doing in our midst.

Blessings,  
Pastor Rushan





## Council Chair Update

Aloha Central Union Church!

Did you know that October is designated as **Clergy Appreciation Month**? And that this Sunday, October 8, 2023, is Clergy Appreciation Day? I hope

you will join me in showing your appreciation to our Senior Minister, Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray, and to our Associate Minister, Rev. Mary Herbig, not only this Sunday but the entire month of October! A minister friend of mine once said he had the easiest job in the world according to some members of his congregation whose only contact with him was to attend worship service for an hour on Sunday morning. By their reckoning, he worked only one day a week (Sunday), and only half a day at that! My friend was joking, of course, because we all know a minister's job can be as endless as the needs of the congregation. In addition to the more noticeable work of preaching sermons each Sunday and officiating at weddings, baptisms and memorial services that are witnessed by many, our ministers also attend to the spiritual, emotional, and personal needs of hundreds of individuals in our congregation. Indeed, ministry is a demanding and stressful job and, too often, our ministers are taken for granted. So please take time to let Pastor Rushan and Pastor Mary know how much we appreciate them and how blessed we are to have them at Central Union Church. And while you are at it, be sure to congratulate Pastor Mary on her 5th anniversary at Central Union!

October is also the time to start reflecting on stewardship. By now, you should have received your stewardship letter from long-time CUC members, Ruth Chang and Dorothy Craven, who are co-chairing this year's stewardship campaign. We are grateful not only for their current leadership but also for the many ways they have contributed to the life of our church over the years. How we steward the resources and gifts God has given Central Union Church is important, but equally important is how we steward the resources and gifts God has given each one of us. The decision to pledge and how much to pledge is a personal matter worthy of reflection and prayer. As you reflect on that decision, I hope you will consider all that God has done in your life, and that pledging is not so much giving of what you have to Central Union Church but returning to God a portion of what God has given to you. Pledging is also very important in that it helps CUC be more purposeful in carrying out God's work – by knowing

how much money is available, we can better plan our church's ministry activities. I invite you to join me in returning your Estimate of Giving Card (to be mailed before the month's end) as soon as possible.

Our first monthly Council meeting with Pastor Rushan was held on September 29, 2023. Allow me to share some news from that meeting:

- **Grants:** Council member Martha Balkin has been busy writing grants to obtain funds for various Church projects. Because of her efforts, Central Union Church was awarded a \$65,000 grant from the Atherton Family Foundation to fund capital improvement work to Atherton Memorial Chapel.
- **Security:** To assure the safety of our members, staff, tenants, kūpuna, keiki, visitors, and all others who visit Central Union Church, the Council is undertaking an assessment of security at our two campuses. Leading this endeavor are Council members Martha Balkin and Sam Failla, assisted by staff member Cory Taylor (Facilities & HSE Manager).
- **Endowment:** A working group has been assembled to conduct a strategic review of the Church's endowment to ensure it is being managed in a manner that will optimize returns within acceptable risk parameters. The group is led by Council member Sarah Nam with the assistance of Council member David Yee and others. The group is working to conclude its review and report to Council by year end.
- **Real Estate Committee:** Council member (and Chair of the Real Estate Committee) David Yee informed the Council that meetings with potential development partners will commence in October. These meetings are intended to be preliminary in nature, for the purpose of providing potential developers with initial information about CUC's objectives and to determine which developers are interested in further conversations. David reiterated that the Real Estate Committee intends to provide a progress report to the congregation by the end of the year.

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

Mahalo,  
Carl Schlack





## What's up at CUPS?

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

The month of September has been filled with many exciting celebrations and activities!

We welcomed Pastor Rushan at Chapel and discussed ways we can show aloha to the people of Lahaina, Maui. Pastor Mary also taught us about loving our neighbor and who is our neighbor.

Room 9 students celebrated their grandparents by inviting them to their classroom to have a special breakfast, do an activity together, and they even performed a song in honor of all that grandparents do!!

We began our Afterschool Extracurricular Activities this month which includes Amazing Athletes, Soccer Shots and 'Ukulele Class.

We ended September with our PTO Welcome Back Picnic! The students and their families spent time reconnecting and making new friends. The children got to play games on the lawn and have a picnic together in Parish Hall.

**Central Union Church Preschool** is currently accepting Preschool Program applications for the 2024-2025 school year! Visit our website to apply online: [centralunionpreschool.org/admissions](https://centralunionpreschool.org/admissions).





## Keiki Corner

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

Food, fellowship, fireworks, and fun in the sun! That was the theme as the children's and youth ministries gathered at Magic Island on September 22 for a special aloha and welcome event with Pastor Rushan and his lovely family. After some time splashing in the waves, a wonderful potluck supper, and fun with friends new and old, we closed the evening with the beautiful fireworks show provided by the Hilton Hawaiian Village! It was a wonderful way to start the weekend!

In Godly Play, the month of September has been dedicated to the season of creation.



Each week we have explored a bit more of the Genesis story of creation through story, reflection, our work time and feast. As we move ever closer to Advent, we will continue exploring our faith through the stories of The Good Shepherd and World Communion, Holy Baptism, The Ark and the Flood, and The Great Family! What an exciting time to join us for Godly Play.

If you would like to learn more about Godly Play, please contact Cayanna Herrera, Director of Children's Ministries at: [cayanna-herrera@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:cayanna-herrera@centralunionchurch.org).

## CU Youth

**Melissa Thach**, *Youth Director*

In the past month, we welcomed Aran (Pastor Rushan's son), participated in school sports, and are doing our best to succeed in school! We are looking forward to Fall Break, our Christmas party, and engaging in community service. We are exploring the best format to introduce Confirmation.



## Meet our new staff members!



Christian Pinera • *Multimedia Specialist*

**Kristen Young**, *Communications Manager*

**Christian ("Chris") Pinera** was born and raised in Mililani, O'ahu. He has a wife, a pit bull, and his first son on the way! He enjoys painting, playing video games, cooking, and expressing himself through clothes. One interesting fact about him: he was in the middle school band and played the alto saxophone in 7th grade. Chris is a certified Audio Engineer through the school of Recording Connection and, in addition to being the new Multimedia Specialist at Central Union, owns a production company called Let Us Work Productions that specializes in music videos and promotional content. What he loves about his work is that it's the one thing in the world that allows you to have more than just a mental note of a special occasion.

Chris' first day at CUC was September 17. He shares, "Working at CUC has been great so far, I'm enjoying my days and the people I'm around. I'm looking forward to leaving behind some type of legacy when it comes to the audio/visual side of church. Beyond how I do things or improve things, I hope to be remembered in a positive way."

At Central Union, Chris will play a significant role in supporting our digital outreach through online worship and managing audio/visual aspects for various projects and events to widen church and community engagement.



Lorna Bright • *Worship Musician*

**Margaret Lloyd**, *Director of Music Ministries*

The Central Union Church Music Ministries Department is excited to welcome **Lorna Bright** as Worship Musician effective October 16, 2023. She will be serving primarily on the Windward campus and her responsibilities will include musical leadership as pianist and also director of the Chancel Singers for Central Union Windward Ministry worship services.

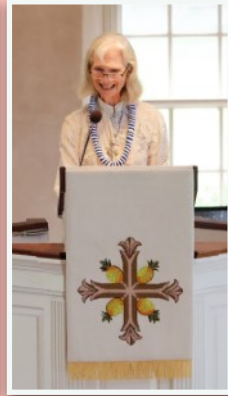
Lorna holds an Associate of Arts in Music from Ozark Christian College in Joplin, MO, and a Bachelor of Science in Education (Music/Education) from San Jose Christian College (now William Jessup University) in San Jose, CA. She is a Yamaha Music Education System Teacher and trained in the Suzuki Piano Method.

She currently serves as a Private Piano Instructor in Kailua.

After leaving Hawai'i some years ago, Lorna spent a decade working in various capacities of the music industry in Nashville, TN. After a relocation to Yuma, AZ, she was engaged in music ministry as well as education. A lifelong educator, Lorna served as Substitute Teacher in the Yuma Union High School District as well as Adjunct Professor of Music at Arizona Western College.



## A look back in photos...



On September 3, we were blessed by the voices of many different members that led us in worship as part of **Laity Sunday**. On this day that we celebrate in worship each year, we remember that we ALL are called and equipped by God to participate and share in the life and work of the church! This year, Marion Lyman-Mersereau shared the sermon, "Hold Fast," in the 7 AM, 9 AM, 11 AM, and online services.



Continuing with our tradition of **Aloha Sunday**, the Royal Court joined us for the 9 AM worship service on September 17, which coincided with Aloha Festivals and Hawaiian History Month. The theme was "pili'āina," to have kinship with the land. We paused to acknowledge and appreciate the 'āina where we live, as well as the host culture; to reflect and remember the Hawaiian Kingdom and its queen, Lili'uokalani, who was unjustly imprisoned and whose kingdom was forcibly taken 130 years ago.



Thirty years ago, our denomination, the United Church of Christ, issued an apology to the Hawaiian people acknowledging and confessing the complicity of our predecessors, including leaders from Central Union Church, in the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. As part of that apology, we committed ourselves to the work of reconciliation.

As we celebrate the abundance, beauty, and grace here in these islands, let us not forget our kuleana (responsibility) to right the wrongs done to this 'āina and its first people.

September 24th was Pastor Rushan's **first Sunday in the pulpit!** We got to welcome him along with his wife Arushini, son Aran, and daughter Alisha, to Central Union Church!



On October 1, we had a **blessing of pets** in celebration of the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, who is known as the patron saint of animals and ecology. We give thanks for all creatures of God's creation and the special relationships we share with them!



## Mahalo!

Many thanks to the **Atherton Family Foundation** for awarding Central Union a grant of \$65,000 for much needed repairs to the Atherton Memorial Chapel. These long-awaited renovations will maintain Atherton Memorial Chapel's and Courtyard's visual and physical integrity and help ensure the structure's viability for future generations. We are very grateful for the Foundation's support!



**Get your holiday greens through  
Central Union Church Preschool!**



**ORDER BY  
10/25/23**

Pickup starts 12/2

Sell one tree, win a pop-up flying disc!



**6 CONVENIENT PICKUP LOCATIONS**

HAWAII KAI | HONOLULU | SALT LAKE | MILILANI | KAPOLEI | KAILUA

Order online! [www.hawaiichristmastrees.com](http://www.hawaiichristmastrees.com)

## Support CUPS!

Get ready for the holidays and order your greens (Christmas trees, wreaths, door charms) from Habilitat Hawai'i through **Central Union Church Preschool** — and support two organizations at once!

Orders are now being accepted online at [HawaiiChristmasTrees.com](http://HawaiiChristmasTrees.com) until October 25, end of day.

Pickups start on December 2 at any of the six locations around the island, including at Central Union Church!

## Remembering Our Saints

Please pray for the family of **Hope Lee**, who died on September 11, 2023. Services were held in Atherton Memorial Chapel on Wednesday, September 20.

