

# THE SPIRE



Photo: Kristen Young

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

January 2024  
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## Pastor's Page: LIGHT

**Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray,**  
*Senior Minister*

Happy New Year. I hope this new year, and indeed the whole year, will be happy for you and your families and for all the things that are important to you. I hope you will be blessed this year: that whatever lies ahead of you this year, it will involve some deepening of your experience, some lessening of your fear and anxiety, and the replacement of a facile optimism that this is the best of all possible worlds with an enduring trust that "all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well".

In the blessings that we may receive this year, if we are open enough to receive them, we may expect that our faith, our sense of God, will be one source of blessing. We come here to Central Union Church week by week in the expectation that we will receive something that will be resourceful to us in the weeks and months ahead. It may not be a life-changing revelation that we receive — though such things do happen and more often than we might expect. Our faith will almost certainly not answer all our problems — though very often we approach our religion with that kind of expectation. The reality is that our exposure to religious questions and the practice of our faith may raise many more questions than it answers. And that is what it is supposed to do.

What I hope is that through our week-by-week gathering in worship, through our committee meetings, through our church programs and activities, and through our life together, we may begin to discover clues about how to be people filled with God's light, love and compassion.

I hope that sense of God, which we experience through our worship, our openness to God's word in scripture, our sharing of communion, and our care for one another, gives us resources for living, and living compassionately, lovingly, creatively and humanly, in a world that often seems to have lost its capacity for compassion, love, creativity and humanity.

I want to offer a word for you to engage with and reflect on this month. It is a particularly important word throughout scripture and is central to our experience and understanding of the Christmas story. The particular word is LIGHT. During January, I will be preaching about the way that God's light shines through all of us shaping our lives and our living in the communities of our daily lives.

Blessings for a wonderful year ahead.

Pastor Rushan

### UPCOMING SERMON SERIES

Jan. 14, 2024: **Let There Be Light**

Jan. 21, 2024: **I Am the Light**

Jan. 28, 2024: **You Are the Light**

Feb. 4, 2024: **Living in the Light**



## Message from Our Church Council Chair

**Carl Schlack**, *Council Chair*

Aloha Central Union Church!

As Sunday gave way to Monday this past week, we celebrated the start of a new year. And while the transition from Sunday to Monday had already happened 51 times before in 2023, we imbued this 52nd time with much more meaning because this time it was a transition from the old (2023) to the new (2024). We look at the beginning of each new year as an opportunity – not just a time of transition but, more importantly, a time of transformation. Many people desire a fresh start and relish the opportunity to change certain aspects of their lives. The expression “out with the old and in with the new” is, for many, paraphrased as “get rid of all the old, bad habits and start again with new, good habits.” It’s like hitting the “restart” button on our lives (just make sure you “save” all the good things).

I believe this desire to change, to become better versions of ourselves, is strong for many people. As Christians, however, the desire to change arises from a more compelling subtext: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!” [2 Corinthians 5:17]. So, when we at Central Union Church say, “We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ”, our seeking to embody Christ reflects not just a desire to change but, on a deeper level, a desire to become a new creation – to change the very way in which we think and act and live. Despite knowing how difficult it can be to change (and even more so to become a new creation), we continue to try and are encouraged by the words of Jesus, “Behold, I am making all things new” [Revelation 21:5], from which we find the hope we need as we seek to transform our lives.

The beginning of 2024 also finds the Church

Council looking forward to the opportunities presented by a new year – opportunities to move existing projects closer to completion and opportunities to address new projects and challenges. Some of the important existing projects include (i) the ongoing assessment (by a joint working group of staff and Council members) of the actions needed to improve security at our two campuses, (ii) efforts to seek additional grant money to address various Church projects and needs, (iii) the strategic review of the Church’s endowment and the consideration of actions needed to ensure management of our endowment that optimizes returns within acceptable risk parameters, (iv) evaluation and revision of the Church’s personnel handbooks, and (v) the Real Estate

Committee’s continuation of meetings with, and evaluations of, potential development partners for the possible development of portions of the Honolulu campus. More information on the foregoing and other Council matters will be forthcoming after the monthly Council meeting at the end of January.

“. . . our seeking to embody Christ reflects not just a desire to change but, on a deeper level, a desire to become a new creation — to change the very way in which we think and act and live.”

So, what does God have in store for you and for Central Union Church as we start 2024? I do not know, of course, but I hope it is a fresh start, a new start, and a strong start, and I pray as we each go forth on our faith journeys into this new year that we are fueled by a sense of profound gratitude for our many blessings and a spirit of generosity of thought and actions toward others. And may we remember Meister Eckhart’s advice about the importance of gratitude: “If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is ‘Thank You’ . . . it will be enough.”

Should you have any questions or otherwise wish to contact me, you can reach me by email at [council-chair@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:council-chair@centralunionchurch.org).

Mahalo,  
Carl Schlack





## Gratitude for White Gifts

**Rebecca Woodland**, *White Gifts Chair*

Thanks to your generosity, 2023's White Gifts project was again a great success! Together we were able to provide over 1,000 gifts to various social service agencies in our island community. Recipients included people of all ages, from infants through kūpuna and every age in between. Many are houseless, in shelters or transition situations, shut-in, or recent immigrants. Some of the agencies we partner with include PACT (Parents and Children Together), Youth Outreach, Keauhou Shelter, Hale Kipa, HUGS, UCC Transition House, Hawaii Meals on Wheels, Fernhurst, and others. Each year, we contact the agencies to find out their current needs (these change every year), the demographics of their clientele, and the number of gifts needed. Armed with this

information, shopping begins. This year, the most requested items were micro-fleece blankets, journals, socks, various hygiene items, plush toys, HotWheels, books for young children, McDonald's gift cards, and air beds (for Keauhou Shelter).

Our White Gifts project blesses the most vulnerable and needy in our community. The agencies all expressed deep gratitude for the gifts we offered, especially knowing that the gifts were exactly what was needed and requested.

Thank you all for your generosity and kind hearts. You have brought Christmas joy to so many who would not have received any gift. May this White Gifts tradition continue for generations to come! May God bless you all.

## White Gifts Pageant

We enjoyed the retelling of the Christmas Story in our White Gifts pageant on December 17.





# Wrapping Up the Holidays

**Cayanna Herrera**, *Director of Children's Ministries & Preschool Music Teacher*

As the decorations come down and are packed away for another year, we want to take a moment to reflect on the holiday season. Many thanks to everyone who helped to gather needed supplies and gifts for our friends on Maui who lost homes in the August 8th wildfires in the past year. The donations were dropped off at the PACT (Parents and Children Together) office on December 18th. We give thanks for organizations like PACT that we can partner with to embrace our wider community!

On Christmas Eve, we celebrated the birth of Jesus with our Family Service. Rounding out the 12 days of Christmas, Godly Play Sunday school experienced two new stories with The Mystery of Christmas and Epiphany! What a beautiful season it has been celebrating the Mystery of Christmas and the start to a new journey of faith in the new year!



## At the Preschool

As the first term of the school year wrapped up, our CUPS 'ohana celebrated the holiday season with Thanksgiving celebrations, class Christmas parties, a winter Snow Day (with real snow!), and Christmas Chapel. After a well-deserved holiday break and kicking off the new year with our families, we are excited to be back in the classroom!





# CU Youth

**Melissa Thach**, Youth Director

Our youth celebrated Christmas with food, fun, games, and gifts at their Christmas party! They helped in Advent & Christmas worship services and volunteered at Serving Aloha over their break. Pray for them as they return to school for the second semester! They are also gearing up for the annual Punahou Parking fundraiser happening on the first weekend of February. Volunteers are needed to assist with parking and providing food! If you'd like to help, please contact [melissa-thach@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:melissa-thach@centralunionchurch.org).



## Messiah i ka 'Ōlelo Hawai'i

Central Union's 74th presentation of Handel's *Messiah*, on December 10, 2023, was in 'Ōlelo Hawai'i for the second year in a row! The oratorio was brought to life by 15 musicians and 48 singers, conducted for the first time by Sarah Young, CUC's Director of Choirs.

Pictured: Sarah Young, *conductor*; Emily Vidler, *soprano*; Jose Barbasa, *countertenor*; Keith Wallace, *tenor*; Dr. Christopher R. Kelsey, *bass*; Margaret Lloyd, *harpichord & Director of Music Ministries*.





# COMING UP AT CUC

## 2024 LENTEN STUDY



**5 TUESDAYS**

Feb. 20, 27; Mar. 5, 12, 19

**6:00-7:15 PM**

*Rewick Board Room  
Central Union Church*

Led by  
Pastor Rushan Sinnaduray

Based on themes explored in  
*Gifts of the Dark Wood*  
by Eric Elnes

Have you failed recently? Do you feel lost, or like the road ahead is unclear? Are you ever tempted? Do you find any part of your life exhausting? Do you feel out of place among your peers, or society at large?

Join Pastor Rushan for this study throughout Lent! Based on themes explored in Eric Elnes' book, *Gifts of the Dark Wood*, we will explore the proposition that our best help on life's journey often comes from the most unlikely and misunderstood of places: a place known famously, or infamously, as the Dark Wood.

The season of Lent begins on February 14, Ash Wednesday, and includes the six weeks leading up to Easter. During this time, we are invited to take on spiritual practices that draw us nearer to God.

The congregation of Central Union and members of the surrounding community are invited to this church dinner sponsored by the Women's League. **Tickets are just \$25 each** and include entertainment and a wide variety of Hawaiian and local cuisine. We will celebrate our unique island culture of various ethnicities and many of their histories and traditions. The overall theme for the evening, "Love and Honesty", reflects our church motto "Love Never Faileth" and is also the title of the famous local song from the 90s by Hawaiian Style Band's Wade Cambern who is the featured headliner for the evening along with others who will share gifts of song and dance.

You can purchase tickets at the church on Sundays, between the end of the 9 AM & start of the 11 AM worship services, or on Wednesdays at the Church Office from 10 AM to 2 PM. You may also reserve tickets online: [bit.ly/feb24cuc](https://bit.ly/feb24cuc).

Contact the Church Office if you have any questions:  
Call: 808-941-0957  
Email: [cuc@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:cuc@centralunionchurch.org)

**The Women's League  
Of Central Union Church  
Proudly Presents...**

*Love  
and  
Honesty*

**Welcome Dinner  
Saturday, February 24, 2024  
5:00 PM**

**Central Union Church, Parish Hall**

Join us for an evening of dinner, entertainment, and fellowship as we welcome our new senior Pastor, new CUC members, and bring together ALL members of our church and community



# RECOGNITION OF 50+ YEAR MEMBERS

We give thanks and celebrate these  
longtime members of our family of faith!

## 1942

Elsbeth "Eppy" Kerr

## 1945

Authur Wriston, Jr.

## 1946

G. Manning Richards

## 1947

Ella Miyashiro

## 1948

Bernadette Kidder  
Joan Martin Rodby  
Christopher "Kit" Smith

## 1950

Leatrice Fung  
Mary Shattuck  
Maureen Shimabuku

## 1952

Amy Hayashi-Hirano  
Glenda Lau

## 1953

Esterae Hagen  
Ralph Johnson, Jr.  
Tan Tek Lum

## 1955

Theodore Awaya  
Sylvia Berrington  
Geraldine "Gerry" Ching  
Julia Ing  
Ann Wayne

## 1956

Caroline Lehman  
Jane Nagel  
Alexandra Tateyama

## 1957

L.D. Cabral  
Peter Drewliner  
Sally Flinn  
Karen Porteus  
Kay Sinovic

## 1958

Patricia Hong  
Thomas Kling  
Carol Ouchi  
Dave Pietsch Jr.  
Corwith Roache  
Ruth Willenborg\*

## 1959

Mary-Laura "Pixie" St. Denis  
Janice Wakamatsu\*

## 1960

Ernest Akau  
Linda Katsuki  
Daniel Lyman

## 1961

Elizabeth Berg  
Janice Chun\*  
Wai Ling Lum  
Michael Pietsch  
Peggy Anne Siegmund\*

## 1962

Heather Macgregor

## 1963

Eleanore Chong  
Mary Greenwell  
Karen Loomis  
Elizabeth Rewick  
Hayden B. Tibbetts, Jr.\*  
Janice Trubitt  
Margaret Wailehua  
Robert Wiemer

## 1964

Harry Au  
Hatsue Au  
Norman Chong  
Patricia Chong  
Ellen Desruisseaux  
Kay Hancock  
Bruce Kim  
Carol Kim  
James Lyman  
Sada Okumura  
Nancy Shaw  
John Wills

## 1965

Jon Richard Allen  
Claire Engle  
Raymond Engle  
Linn Garcia\*  
Michele Hamada  
Nicholas Nagel  
Barbara Osborn  
James Pietsch  
Virgil Rewick



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  
Anita Racuya  
Carl Racuya  
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  
Daniel Tuttle III  
Jean Yokoyama-McDonald

1970

Anita Di Mauro  
Anne Irons-Palma  
Merle Stetser  
Remedios Sonson  
Samuel P. Sonson  
Lynn Tanoue

1971

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

1972

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

1973

Michael Clifford  
Lesley Brey  
Laurie Bugbee  
Lorrian Hirano  
Robert Miller  
Kent Reinker  
Carol Asuncion  
Miguel Asuncion  
Vivian Chang  
Ann McGovern  
Sarah Richards  
Sandra Young

\* = Central Union  
Windward members

We will celebrate these members in worship on January 21.

If you know of a name that is missing from this list, please let the church know!  
[cuc@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:cuc@centralunionchurch.org)



# LOOKING AHEAD

**January 21**

Celebration of 50+ Year Members

**January 28**

Kalaupapa Sunday

Health and Human Service Sunday

**February 14** - Lent begins

Ash Wednesday - 6:30 PM, Atherton Chapel

**February 18**

Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia Sunday

**February 20** - Lenten Study Session 1

**February 24**

"Love and Honesty" Welcome Dinner

**February 25**

Scout Sunday with Troop 777, 9 AM

**February 27** - Lenten Study Session 2

**March 5** - Lenten Study Session 3

**March 10**

UCC Special Mission Offering collected for  
*One Great Hour of Sharing*

**March 12** - Lenten Study Session 4

**March 19** - Lenten Study Session 5

**March 24**

Palm Sunday - Services at 7, 9, 11 AM

**March 28**

Maundy Thursday, Service TBA

**March 29**

Good Friday - 7 PM, Sanctuary

**March 31**

Easter - Services at 7, 9, 11 AM

## Mahalo, Troop 777!



We thank Troop 777 for their generous Christmas donation to our church. They shared, "Thank you so much for your continued support of Boy Scout Troop 777. We know the past few years have been extremely difficult for all due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate you opening your doors and providing a home where our Scouts can thrive. We look forward to serving the Church and our community for years to come!"

This year, we will celebrate **Scout Sunday with Troop 777 on February 25** in the 9 AM worship service. Boy Scouts of America observes Scout Sunday as an opportunity for Scouts to publicly demonstrate the 12th point of the Scout Law: A Scout is Reverent. Troop 777 says that Scout Sunday is particularly meaningful for them as our church is its chartering organization.

## Remembering Our Saints

Please pray for the families of **Sue Johnson**, who died on December 29, 2023; and **Martha Lee Mullen**, who died on December 31, 2023. Services are pending.



## New Timeline for The Spire

Content due date: **1st day of each month**

Publication: **2nd Wednesday of each month**

Submissions of relevant stories, photos, and news are welcome for consideration! Please email:

[news@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:news@centralunionchurch.org)