

THE SPIRE



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

February 2024
Vol. 94 - No. 2



Pastor's Page: Entering Lent

Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray,
Senior Minister

Friends,

This month we move into the liturgical season of Lent, those forty days from Ash Wednesday until Palm Sunday, a somber and sober time in the Church's calendar when we reflect on our impermanence, our humanity and the grace that sustains us.

Lent is a time of prayer and reflection. It is a time to sense the nonsensical ways of God. It is a time to be in God's time, beyond the dictates of clock and deadline. It is a time to stand waiting for the God who comes in strange guises wanting to be in relationship with us. It is a time to discover a deeper relationship with our God of love.

Lent invites us to get off the road — to get off all our roads, whether we're traveling swiftly or slowly, and to venture into uncertainty and questioning. To disconnect us from the usual and familiar in order to later see them in a new light.

The Lenten journey is different from other journeys. Lent moves us away from the surety of well-known roads and signs, to re-orientate us in God.

During this season of Lent, in worship, we will focus on journeys, and more specifically on Essentials for the Journey. In our Sunday worship, we will reflect on the tools and the supplies we need on our journey of faith. Our Lenten Study Group will draw on the writings of Pastor Eric Elnes in his book, *Gifts of the Dark Wood: Seven Blessings for Soulful Skeptics (and Other Wanderers)*. We are offering two opportunities to participate in the study group — Tuesday evenings (6:00 - 7:15 PM) or Thursday mornings (11 AM - 12:30 PM). There is no need to read the book to participate in this Lenten experience — we will use video and discussion to journey through the Dark Wood as we probe, question and discover a deeper relationship with God. I hope you will join us.

Blessings and peace,
Pastor Rushan



Pastor Rushan preached at Central Union Windward on February 11, Transfiguration Sunday. He is pictured here with Kahu Dick Walenta (left) and Rev. Arthur Briggs (right) who are among the guest preachers for the Windward Ministry.

LENTEN SERMON SERIES Lent: Essentials for the Journey

Feb. 18 • COMPASS

Feb. 25 • FLASHLIGHT

Mar. 3 • BREAD

Mar. 10 • SHELTER

Mar. 17 • WATER

2024 LENTEN STUDY



5 GATHERINGS *morning & evening options available!*

THURSDAYS | 11 AM-12:30 PM
FEB 15, 22; MAR 7, 14, 21

TUESDAYS | 6:00-7:15 PM
FEB 20, 27; MAR 5, 12, 19

Rewick Board Room, Admin Bldg.

Led by Pastor Rushan
CENTRAL UNION CHURCH

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



Cycles & Rhythms of the Church Council



Carl Schlack, *Council Chair*

Aloha Central Union Church!

As we enter the season of Lent, we are reminded that the Church year has its cycles and rhythms. And although each year is different, there is a familiar cadence as we prepare for and experience the seasons of Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, among others. The Church Council also has its own cycles and rhythms. In addition to regular monthly meetings to review the status of the church's finances and ongoing projects, and to address church-related issues and policy considerations, the Council also plans and prepares for larger meetings with the congregation such as our Annual and Budget meetings. Given the size and history of Central Union Church, maintaining continuity from one Council to the succeeding Council is important. That is why we have a rotational system for electing Council members. ***Let me explain.***

Our Bylaws provide for a Council consisting of 5 Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and Chair of the Diaconate) and 9 At Large members. The 9 At Large members are divided into 3 groups of 3 people each who are elected by the congregation at the Annual meeting on a staggered basis with one-third of the At Large members elected each year to serve for a term of 3 years. The process repeats itself each year with 3 At Large members ***rotating off*** the Council while 3 new At Large members ***rotate on*** the Council. In this way, continuity is preserved by always having 6 At Large members carry over into the succeeding Council. Similarly, the Vice Chair, who serves on the Council in that position for 2 years, succeeds automatically to the Chair when Chair's term ends, ensuring a seamless transition and that the highest lay leader in our church is well aware of what is happening at Central Union Church. The process of nominating church members for election by the congregation to serve as officers and members of the Council is the responsibility of the Nominations and Governance Committee of the

Council (the "**NGC**"). Because the process takes time and must comply with certain Bylaws requirements, it has to begin months before the Annual Membership meeting.

Let me explain further.

At least 2 months before the Annual meeting, the NGC has to submit a list of nominated candidates to the Council for approval. Since the Council meets only once a month, that means the NGC needs to submit the list to the Council at least 3 months before the Annual meeting. Once approved by the Council, the list of candidates has to be submitted to the congregation for review at least 45 days before the Annual meeting. Sounds simple enough, but here is the challenging and time-consuming part: identifying the right mix of people (who are reflective of our congregational diversity) who are willing to commit the time and energy to serve for 3 years. So even though the Annual meeting of the congregation won't take place until September, the NGC must start the process now.

And now the most important part: If you are interested in serving on the Council or would like to know more about what such service entails, please contact me and I will be happy to schedule a call with you. This year we will have 4 At Large member positions available instead of 3 due to the resignation of an existing At Large member. There are also 3 Officer positions available (Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary). Although we have many talented church members in our congregation, we are in special need of someone with a strong financial and/or accounting background willing to serve as Treasurer. Also, "younger" church members (I use that term loosely to mean anyone under 50 years old) are underrepresented on the Council and are encouraged to contact me by email at council-chair@centralunionchurch.org.

Mahalo,
Carl Schlack

Meet Our Newest Soloist

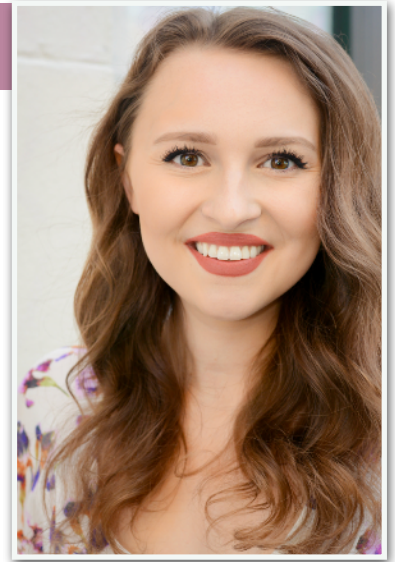
Margaret Lloyd, *Director of Music Ministries*

The CUC Music Ministries Department is excited to welcome Natalie Mitchell as Soprano Soloist effective January 11, 2024. Her responsibilities at CUC include solo work; singing with the Soloist Ensemble and Ke Aloha Pau 'Ole; and serving as a Soprano section leader with the Chancel Choir and The Hawai'i Nui Chorale.

By way of introduction:

Canadian Soprano Natalie Mitchell is praised for her versatile warm instrument, stage craft and dramatic intensity. Natalie has performed across Canada, Italy, and the USA. While studying at SFCM, she started the first Nordic guitar and voice duo with Guitarist Oskar Magnussen; they will make their European debut tour in summer '24. She holds a Bachelor of Music Honors in Voice Performance from Western University. Natalie earned her Master's degree and the prestigious Professional Studies Diploma from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Susanne Mentzer.

Natalie Mitchell



Since moving to Hawai'i, Natalie has been a featured soloist with the Hawai'i Vocal Arts Ensemble both in the Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem*. Natalie is thrilled to be a young artist with Hawaii Opera Theatre's Mae Z. Orvis Opera Studio this season. She is covering the role of Nedda in *Pagliacci* in February 2024.

As a chamber musician, she is a founding member of Honolulu-based voice and piano duo 'Imi Ola with Pianist Jasmine Nagano. This past summer, they received a fully funded residency at the Avaloch Institute of Chamber Music. They were chosen for the 23/24 Lutheran Church of Honolulu First Mondays Concert Series this November and performed as guest artists for the Coral Reef Foundation Maui Relief Benefit Concert with Hawai'i Symphony Musicians and Ukulele prodigy Jake Shimabukuro.

Join me in welcoming Natalie to our choral ministry as together "We Engage and Embrace All as we seek to Embody Christ!"

Young-ish Adults

Rev. Mary Herbig, *Associate Minister*

Our young adults have started gathering regularly again! We are forming a leadership team to work on visioning for future events and projects. On Super Bowl Sunday (pictured), our gathering included first-timers and friends from other churches who joined the fun—there was something for everyone... food, fellowship, music, commercials, even football!



CU Youth

Melissa Thach, *Youth Director*

At the beginning of the month was our annual Punahou Parking fundraiser — our youth worked hard and had fun and it was a very successful event. Thank you to those who came out and volunteered. We appreciate your support of our CU Youth! The funds donated from parking will go toward projects the youth want to support as well as cover expenses for a Back-to-School/Confirmation Kickoff Retreat at the end of the summer.

We are currently doing a study on Conflict on Sunday mornings to help us understand our beliefs about conflict and how we can resolve it well. Later this month we will participate in the Women's League "Love & Honesty" event. Over Spring Break, we will volunteer with Serving Aloha on campus.

This summer we will begin our Confirmation journey with some special events and meetings, open to all youth in 6th-12th grade to learn more about the United Church of Christ and other Christian traditions, as well as other faith traditions. We have some really cool events lined up for our youth to explore and articulate where they are on their own faith journey.



Keiki Corner

Cayanna Herrera, *Director of Children's Ministries*

It seems like Christmas was just yesterday and here we are speeding full steam ahead into Lent! In Children's Ministry, Lent means looking at the Faces of Easter in our Lenten Godly Play story. This special "building story" starts with the Nativity and ends with Easter. Each story is told with a special plaque showing one of the Faces of Jesus from birth through his ministry and ultimately his death and resurrection. Each week adds another plaque until we reach the Mystery of Easter. As I have worked to prepare for these stories, I am reminded that our lives are much the same — each stage and season building upon the last until our story is complete. And yet, for every ending, there is also a beginning in the unending story of our lives of faith. As we move through our Lenten journey and prepare for the Mystery of Easter, may we reflect on the seasons of our past and anticipate with joy the seasons of our future!

KEIKI QUIPS

*Things our children say...
may they bring us joy and challenge us to embrace
the innocence, faith, and curiosity of a child!*

Recently a parent wrote me a beautiful email outlining a few of the wonderful questions our keiki ask. Both of the following questions were asked by one of our five-year-old children. How would you have answered?

"How did God and Jesus create themselves?"

"Who made our raw food?" (She means the ingredients that go into cooked food.) To which [her mother] answered, "God and farmers." Then she followed up with "I'm going to say, thank you God and farmers for our raw food."



Celebrating Creation from Butterflies to Dragons

Shelly Taira, *Assistant Preschool Director*

Here at CUPS, we all gather for Chapel twice a month. In January the Pink Cottage students shared the Story of Creation. They used costumes and props to remind us about how God created all of the wonderful, beautiful gifts in our world, like the sun, moon, stars, sky, sea, plants, animals and people. Our friends in Room 8 reminded us that whenever we are scared or worried, we can look to Jesus and God. Just like Jesus said to his disciples when they were in the middle of a storm, “TRUST me and I will calm the waters.”

Also, during the month of January, the CUPS keiki had a hands-on experience with Monarch butterflies. Much mahalo to “Sharing the Butterfly Experience” for teaching our keiki about the butterfly life cycle. The children got to hold caterpillars and feed and release the butterflies using their gentle hands.

The students have been doing some fun activities in their classrooms to get into the Chinese New Year spirit. We enjoyed celebrating the Year of the Dragon by watching the Lion Dance from Saam Fu Chinese Cultural Arts.



On January 21, we celebrated those who have been members for 50 years or more.
Some of those members shared with us their reflections and hopes for CUC!

I hope we can return to our roots. In the past Central Union was an instigator with Habitat For Humanity and other social programs.

—Nicholas Nagel
Member since 1965

... we look forward to a vibrant and revitalized church, plus working openly and closely together to ensure that our beautiful campus is retained and kept whole for future generations.

—Mary Ellen Nordyke-Grace
Member since 1971

Implement the financial plan to keep the buildings and grounds as a beautiful oasis in overcrowded Honolulu. ...

Follow our founding principles.

—Roy King Jr.
Member since 1972

I'd like to see more multi-generational families sitting together. I did it with my parents until they passed.

—Eleanore Chong
Member since 1963

... to become an even more welcoming church, to make sure that everyone is greeted at the front door and welcomed as if they really mean it.

—Christopher "Kit" Smith
Member since 1948

... a church filled with small groups ministering to all kinds of needs, the needs of the people in the group and the needs of the community.

—Marjorie Smith
Member since 1972



I like our diversity and hope for more I'm proud of our history and hope we'll still explore I hope we'll always strive for a ten out of ten score our new preacher makes it clear what he stands for

I hope we can get more youth involved maybe this will help the church be more evolved whatever may be our church's hopes or cares nothing changes that cross and the words it bears

—Marion Lyman-Mersereau
Member since 1966

... continue to grow to keep our doors open and all who pass through experience hope in their lives. My dream is that CUC find a means to sustain our church. I pray that we can grow our numbers and increase our congregation through becoming a beacon of hope.

—Koby Berrington
Member since 1955

... that we can meet the needs of our varied members while making practical and meaningful contributions to the community at large.

—Dr. Sandy J. Young
Member since 1973

I really enjoy the camaraderie. ... that somebody was really looking out for us.

—Carol Asuncion
Member since 1973

What's keeping us here is the people we have met and made friends with.

—Miguel Asuncion
Member since 1973

May the loving embrace of our dear Central Union inspire us to bring justice and peace to all, locally and globally.

—Leatrice Fung
Member since 1950

I hope we can learn to follow God's will, to find the best support for CUC so that our church can remain to be a guiding light in Hawai'i in the future.

—Jane Nagel
Member since 1956



MAHALO to ALL our 50+ year members for your faithfulness, your steadfast love, and for modeling the way of Christ for us. You are an inspiration!

LOOKING AHEAD

February 14 - Ash Wednesday

6:30 PM, Atherton Chapel

February 18

Henry 'Ōpūkaha'ia Sunday

10 AM Bible Study w/ Donald Schmidt:

"What the Bible Says

(and Doesn't Say) About Easter"

10 AM New Members Class

February 24

5 PM "Love and Honesty" Welcome Dinner

February 25

9 AM & Online: Scout Sunday w/ Troop 777

March 3

2 PM Concert: James Kealey, organist

March 9

4 PM Film Screening & Panel Discussion

Israelism hosted by Community Ministry

March 10

UCC *One Great Hour of Sharing* offering

March 17

4 PM Concert: Nā Wai Chamber Choir

March 24 - Palm Sunday

7, 9, 11 AM Services

March 28 - Maundy Thursday

5:30 PM, Parish Hall

March 29 - Good Friday

7 PM, Sanctuary

March 31 - Easter

6:15 AM Ecumenical Service @ Punchbowl

7, 9, 11 AM Services

10 AM 'Ohana Easter Egg Hunt

April 14

4 PM Service of Installation - Pastor Rushan

Diaper Drive

DONATE DIAPERS AND/OR WIPES

February 18 – March 31
Sundays @ Central Union Church
Mon-Fri @ Office, 9 AM-3 PM
808-941-0957

Central Union Church
Children's Ministry

In partnership with
ALOHA
diaper bank

1 IN 2 FAMILIES STRUGGLE w/ DIAPER NEED

DONATE



bit.ly/diaper4keiki



This Lenten season, Children's Ministry is doing a Diaper Drive in partnership with the Aloha Diaper Bank to help alleviate diaper need in our community—and the entire congregation is invited to join in!

How to Contribute:

- **Donate diapers and/or wipes** that will be taken to Aloha Diaper Bank after our Easter celebrations. Diapers and wipes may be brought to church every Sunday of Lent and on Easter Sunday or may be dropped off in the Church Office for Cayanna Herrera during regular business hours during Lent.

- **Make a financial donation in person or online:**

bit.ly/diaper4keiki

Let's help with these "Essentials for the Journey" for those in need in our community this Lenten season! Learn more about diaper need and its impact on our community: alohadiaperbank.org.

Easter Flowers - \$10.00 each

Name (Donor) _____

Number of plants _____

_____ To the Glory of Easter.

_____ In honor of _____

_____ In loving memory of _____

Please print legibly.



Please make check(s) payable to "CENTRAL UNION CHURCH" with the words, "Easter Flowers" in the memo line. Please mail or bring checks to the church office, by **Sunday, March 24**, to be listed in the Easter Day bulletins.