

"Love and Honesty" event  
February 24, 2024  
Photo: Margaret Lloyd

# THE SPIRE



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

March 2024  
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**Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray,**  
*Senior Minister*

We continue our journey through Lent towards Easter. We, the Church, are an Easter people. The Easter event is at the center of who we are and

what we believe.

So, what does it mean to be an Easter People? In the Acts of the Apostles, we're told that the first Christian congregation, meeting in Jerusalem, guided by the Apostles and in the shadowed light of the first Easter "gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ." What's interesting is that they gave their testimony in deeds rather than words. They may not have had all the answers as to the how, what or whether of a bodily resurrection. They knew that belief in the resurrection of Jesus was a way of life before it was ever summarized in churchly creeds.

Jesus is notable for the way he lived within the inclusive hospitality of God, his care for the outcast and the needy, his practice and teaching on prayer and his warnings about the power and perils of possessions. The message of Jesus was lived out within groups of real and fragile people exploring together what it might mean for them to live within the love of God as Jesus did.

There are many in our world today who seek to follow Jesus without the complications and burdens of church life. Of course, you can be a person of faith without the church, but it's difficult to see how anyone could be a serious follower of Jesus Christ without some sort of community seeking to express the Jesus alternative through their life together. Qualities like forgiveness, generosity, love, hospitality and healing are fine sounding but unless they're expressed in the life of a community, they remain words without any genuine meaning. They're all communal activities. They're the glue that holds any decent and life-enhancing community together.

The distinctive Protestant form of Christian community is the congregation. So, Central Union Church is our school for Christian living, our

monastery, and our community of formation, sharing, prayer and support. This is the place and the people where we ask what it means to live within the resurrection story and what it means to be a Christian community reflecting the way of Jesus Christ. Like the early church, we give testimony to the resurrection through our life together, through our pleasure in each other's company, in our desire to grow in faith, in our confidence that we're together on the journey of life and faith, that we care and pray for one another and that together we're exploring what it means to embody the way of Jesus in a needy world. It's the setting where we can explore together what the big Christian words of hospitality, sharing, love, forgiveness, generosity, peace, grace, might mean for us and the community in which we live.

Who and what we are as a church 'ohana is all part of our ongoing testimony to the resurrection and our embodiment of the way of Jesus. So, this Easter, no matter who you are and where you are on your journey of life and of faith, I invite you to recommit to sharing your journey of faith with us here at Central Union Church, and find a home for your Spirit here in this place, here, in this community.







## Gratitude for “Love and Honesty”

Aloha Central Union Church!

A couple Saturdays ago, in the evening on February 24, 2024, the much publicized “Love and Honesty” event was held in our Parish Hall. It was billed as a gathering to welcome our

new(ish) Senior Minister, Pastor Rushan and his family, along with new members of Central Union Church and people from the surrounding community, but it turned out to be much more than that which is why I am making it the subject of my monthly Spire article.

The idea for this church-wide gathering came from our Women’s League Ministry which sponsored the event and took responsibility for all phases of planning, organization, and implementation. It was truly a team effort and it had to be, given the magnitude of the operation. However, despite the best intentions, it is not unusual for doubts to creep in as you move from the idea stage to the implementation stage. Would people be interested in such an event? Even if people were interested, could enough tickets be sold to make it feasible? Even if enough tickets were sold, would people actually show up? And even if people showed up, would the event meet the Women’s League objective of demonstrating the diversity of Central Union’s people and ministries and inspire people to more active involvement in our church (including a desire for a similar event on an annual basis)?

With unwavering enthusiasm and energy, Women’s League members went to work to ensure the event would be successful. Entertainment was arranged and confirmed; multiple forms of publicity (announcements, flyers, banners, e-blast, Spire, etc.) were utilized to get the word out; ongoing ticket sales took place over several weeks; a diverse menu was created and food was ordered; displays celebrating Central Union Church history and ministries were envisioned and then developed; a

floor plan for the Parish Hall was drawn up identifying table locations and table centerpieces were created; logistics of food delivery and food service were implemented; and much, much more.

The result was an evening to remember that was talked about for several days afterwards. I understand the final head count was 209 people – 209 people who filled the Parish Hall and dined on delicious Hawaiian and other local food favorites; 209 people who were entertained by talented musicians and dancers; and 209 people who ended our time of fellowship together in a large circle

singing “Hawai’i Aloha” after hearing inspiring words from Pastor Rushan. While I would like to individually recognize each person who made the event such a success, I know that would be unwise for two reasons. The first reason is practical – the list of names would be so long that I would exceed the space

allotted for my article in

The Spire! The second reason is my fear, given the number of people who played a role in making the evening a success, that I would inadvertently fail to mention someone which would be unjust. So, it is better to recognize, once again, that it was a team effort that, like most winning teams, needed the contribution of many hands to achieve success.

The following morning, as I drove to Central Union to attend the 11 AM Contemporary Service in the same Parish Hall where I was the night before, it occurred to me why the “Love and Honesty” event was much more than a fun evening. As a community of believers, we desire to connect, to be in fellowship with our community, and for three hours the night before, 209 people connected in that community. So, many thanks to the Women’s League for taking a chance and creating the time and space to make that happen.

Mahalo,  
**Carl Schlack**  
Council Chair



# Church Council Sponsors Resolution

In February, a team of writers from within the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ approached Central Union Church's (CUC) Council to sponsor a Resolution of Witness, titled "A Call to Education and Action Regarding the Crisis in Gaza." A Resolution of Witness makes a moral and theological statement about a pressing issue and often contains a call to action for churches and members. In order to be considered by the larger body of the Conference at the 'Aha Pae'āina, a Resolution of Witness must be sponsored by one or more churches from the Conference.

The writing team was led by CUC member Reem Bassous, who presented the resolution to our Council. The resolution calls on Conference churches to do three things:  
a) to publicly pray and call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and Palestine;

b) to call for an end to the blockades of humanitarian aid preventing critical food and medical supplies from getting into Gaza; and c) to commit to educating ourselves about the history and current conflict in Palestine and Israel.

After thoughtful discussion and a couple minor modifications, our Council unanimously voted to sponsor this Resolution of Witness, allowing the resolution to come before the 'Aha Pae'āina for discussion in June. We have since been joined by five of our sister churches, who have also voted to sponsor the resolution.

If you are interested in reading "[A Call to Education and Action Regarding the Crisis in Gaza](#)" in its entirety, you can find it on our website by clicking NEWS on the navigation bar, or call the Church Office, 808-440-3014.

"... we are called to engage with theological depth and Christian compassion in response to the Israel-Palestine conflict."

## Prepare to Dazzle with CUPS!



**Shelly Taira**, Assistant Preschool Director

Mark your calendars! We are hosting our twenty-second year of fundraising with Dazzle 2024 on Friday, April 26, 2024. This year's theme is "Dream Big". It will be a lovely evening of food, music and camaraderie here on our beautiful CUPS campus. Many well-known chefs will be on-site again. There will be a live auction and an online auction, including donations from families and the community as well as CUPS Class Treasures to be displayed in the classrooms for viewing first-hand, the night of the event!

Funds from Dazzle help support educational curriculum, tuition assistance programs, professional development for staff, and upgrades to the school's facilities. We are seeking donations of goods and services and gift certificates from merchants in our community. If you would like to donate to our auction, please contact us at [CUPSfundraiser@centralunionpreschool.org](mailto:CUPSfundraiser@centralunionpreschool.org).



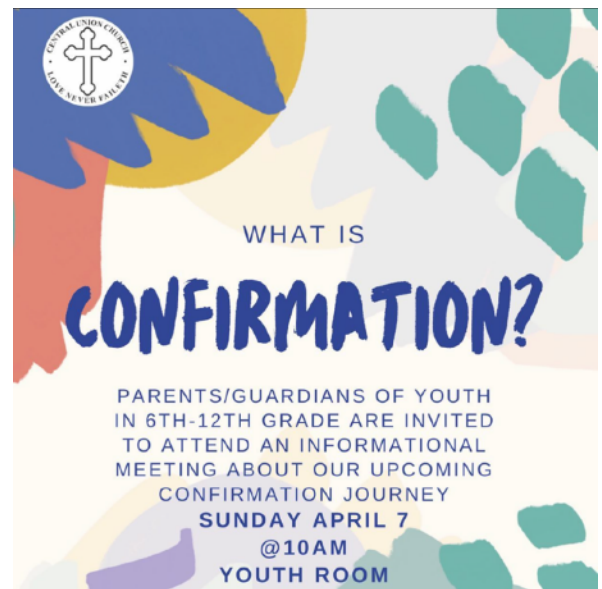
Tickets will be available online starting March 15. Check upcoming church communications!



# CU Youth Talk Conflict

**Melissa Thach**, Youth Director

Over the past few weeks, the youth have been discussing conflict – where it comes from, how we deal with it, and what it looks like to resolve it well. We discussed the inevitability of conflict and, since it is bound to happen, the importance of working together to resolve it. One week we highlighted communication styles and breakdowns as a main cause of conflict. We did an activity to illustrate how easily we can misinterpret what someone else is saying. In our activity, one person drew a picture on a paper plate and described what they were doing step by step. The rest of us drew on our own paper plates following the instructions of the original artist. The room erupted in laughter when we saw the original drawing next to our interpretations (pictured here). This happens so often in our communication - and it is important to ask questions to clarify what the other person means instead of jumping to conclusions and assuming we know the other person's intent. In a world that is quick to speak and slow to listen, my hope is that we will do the opposite and our conflicts will be resolved well.



## **COMING UP:**

**March 27** - Volunteer at Serving Aloha + shave ice outing

**March 31, 9 AM** - Help with the Easter Egg Hunt

**April 7, 10 AM** - Parent meeting for our Confirmation Journey

## Central Union Welcomes New Staff

Please join us in welcoming these two new staff members to the CUC community!



### **Jennie Scott**

comes to us with years of experience in the nonprofit world. Her main areas of responsibility will be Human Resources and office management as our **Organizational Manager**.



### **Tracy Tassie**

will be supporting the Windward Ministry as **Office Administrator**. She will be staffing the office at the Windward campus three mornings a week.

You can reach her at:

[jennie-scott@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:jennie-scott@centralunionchurch.org)

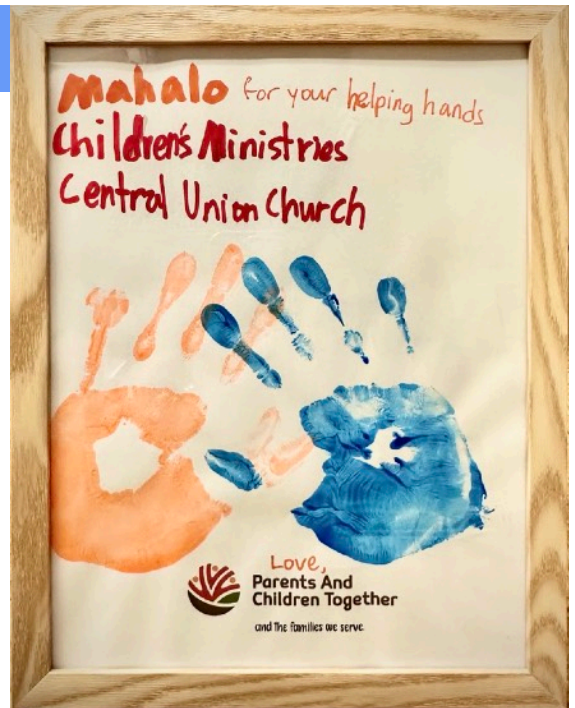
You can reach her at:

[tracy-tassie@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:tracy-tassie@centralunionchurch.org)

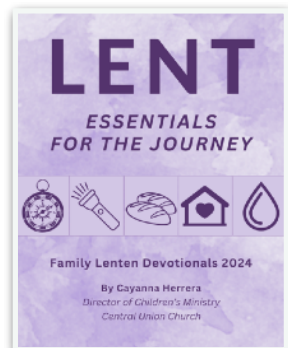
# Keiki Corner

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

This week I received a spectacular surprise in the mail. Enclosed in a large, padded envelope was a lovely thank you message from Parents and Children Together expressing their gratitude for our efforts to collect needed items for survivors of the Maui Wildfires. I would like to pass along their thanks and express my own gratitude for all who worked to make this past Christmas a special time for those experiencing such loss.



In recent weeks, we have also been growing through our **Family Lenten Devotionals** available on the church website ([centralunionchurch.org/devotionals](http://centralunionchurch.org/devotionals)), Godly Play, and whale watching aboard the Star of Honolulu!



## COMING UP:

**March 26, 10 AM - 2PM**

Beach Day at Ala Moana

Scan the QR code to [register online!](#)



**March 31, 10 AM**

Our annual **Easter Eggstravaganza**

will be held on Sunday, March 31 at 10 AM on the Preschool lawn. Keiki are invited to bring a basket and 'hunt' for eggs. Each egg collected will represent a monetary donation that will be made to the Aloha Diaper Bank, the organization we're partnering with this Lenten season. Thanks to those who've already brought in donations for our Diaper Drive! Donations of diapers and wipes may be brought to the Church Office during regular business hours or brought to church on Sundays through Easter. For more information about diaper need in Hawai'i, visit [alohadiaperbank.org](http://alohadiaperbank.org).







The **O'ahu Association**  
of the **United Church of Christ**  
invites your prayers for and presence at the

Service of Installation  
*for*  
The Rev. A. Rushan Sinnaduray  
as Senior Minister of Central Union Church



Sunday, April 14, 2024, 4:00 p.m.  
**Central Union Church**

1660 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawai'i



GUEST PREACHER  
**John Pavlovitz**  
*writer, pastor, activist*



Clergy are invited to  
stole and process  
(liturgical color: **RED**)

Reception to follow. **ALL** are welcome!  
Bring a **potluck side dish** to share if you can.  
Please **RSVP** for the reception by **April 7**:  
Online [bit.ly/rsvp41424](https://bit.ly/rsvp41424) OR call 808-440-3004



## Remembering Our Saints

Please pray for the family of **Nyle Hallman**. She died on February 14, 2024.  
Services are scheduled for **March 23 at 3 PM in the Sanctuary**.

Please also hold in prayer the family of **Patricia Dooley**, who died on  
February 16, 2024. Services are pending.

In addition, hold in prayer the family of **J. Richard Allen** who died on  
February 24, 2024. Services are pending.



## LOOKING AHEAD

### March 17 - Lenten Concert

4 PM, Sanctuary - Nā Wai Chamber Choir  
presents Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater"

### March 24 - Palm Sunday

*Celebrating Jesus' triumphal entry into  
Jerusalem*

Regular Sunday services

10-11 AM **Potluck**, Women's Building

### March 28 - Maundy Thursday

*Remembering Jesus' final meal with his  
disciples*

5:30 PM, Parish Hall - RSVP for dinner!

### March 29 - Good Friday

*Remembering Jesus' crucifixion and death*  
7 PM, Sanctuary

### March 31 - Easter

*Celebrating Jesus' resurrection*

6:15 AM Ecumenical Service @ Punchbowl

Regular Sunday services

10 AM Easter Eggstravaganza

### April 14

4 PM Service of Installation - Pastor Rushan

### April 26

Dazzle 2024, Preschool fundraiser

### May 3

CUPS Lei Day program

### May 19 - Pentecost Sunday

10 AM, Sanctuary - One in-person service  
Collect Strengthen the Church offering

### June 13-15 - 'Aha Pae'āina

CUC to host Hawai'i Conference gathering

### June 22

E-waste collection on campus

### July 22-26

Children's Ministry Compassion Camp



## 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.