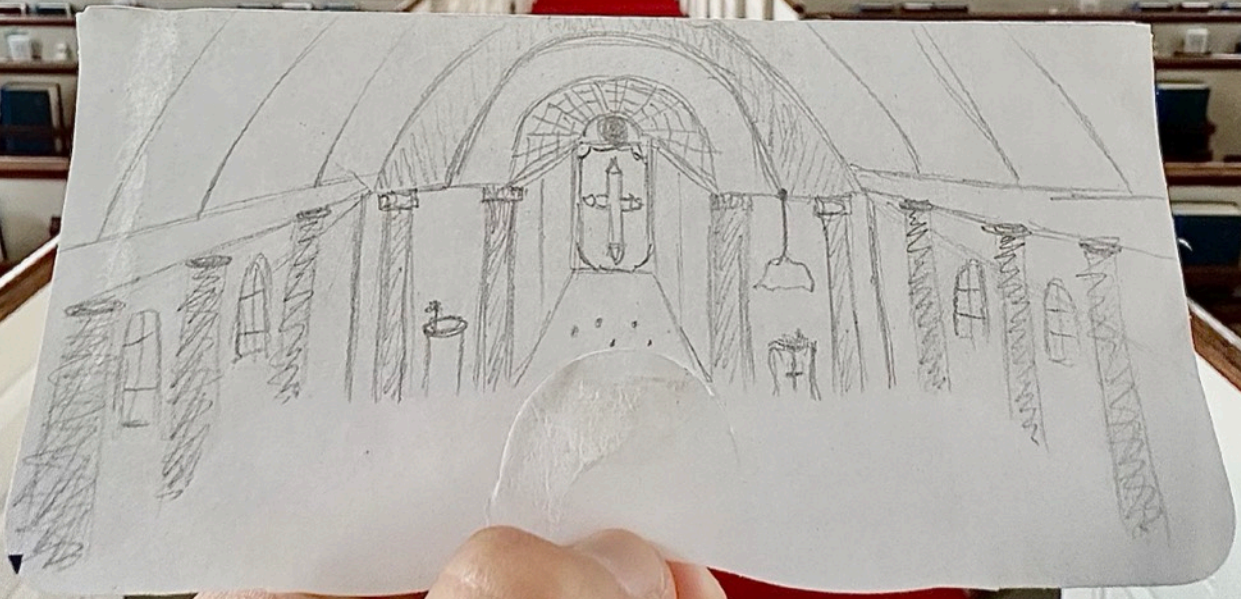


THE SPIRE

Pictured: Sanctuary interior anonymously sketched on an offering envelope. Last month in May 2024, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the dedication of our Sanctuary!





Pastor's Page: Growing in Christ-likeness

Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray,
Senior Minister

Our current mission statement says that “We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody

Christ!” The way I read it, our primary calling is to EMBODY Christ and that is the reason we ENGAGE and EMBRACE all. When Jesus called his disciples, he said to them, “Follow me!” He didn’t say, ‘Come and be religious.’ He didn’t say, ‘Come and read the Bible or make the Bible your rulebook for everything in life’ or ‘Come and learn lots of clever ideas about how to answer questions about life, the universe and everything.’ He didn’t say, ‘Come and be good people.’ He said, “FOLLOW ME!”

Paul wrote that as Christians on earth we are the body of Christ. To be the body of Christ we have to look like Christ, act like Christ, be like Christ. It’s not about all growing long hair, beards and wearing white robes! It is not about physical appearance; it’s about how our lives look. This is about more than an occasional tweak in our behavior. It’s more about allowing the Holy Spirit to work deeply in us and change us from the inside out.

To be a Christian is to be someone who has heard Jesus’ voice saying, ‘Follow me! Come and be like me.’ Too often people say, ‘I’m a good person! I’m a Christian person.’ They may be good, but if they’re not interested in following Jesus and learning about him in order to become more like him, the word ‘Christian’ isn’t really being used correctly.

So how do we go about growing in Christ-likeness? It would be easy to make a list of the characteristics we would like to see from Christ-like individuals or Christ-like churches.

Generous, sharing, thoughtful, loving, just, supportive. But this could also describe the local Service Club or community group. They too are very good at rallying round when there is a need and often even when there isn’t. What we need are churches inspired by the relationship of their members with their God and creator. People made in the image of God and renewed in the image of Christ. People of Prayer. People who spend time with their God, just as Jesus did. People who follow Jesus in this and all things and strive to be more like him every day.

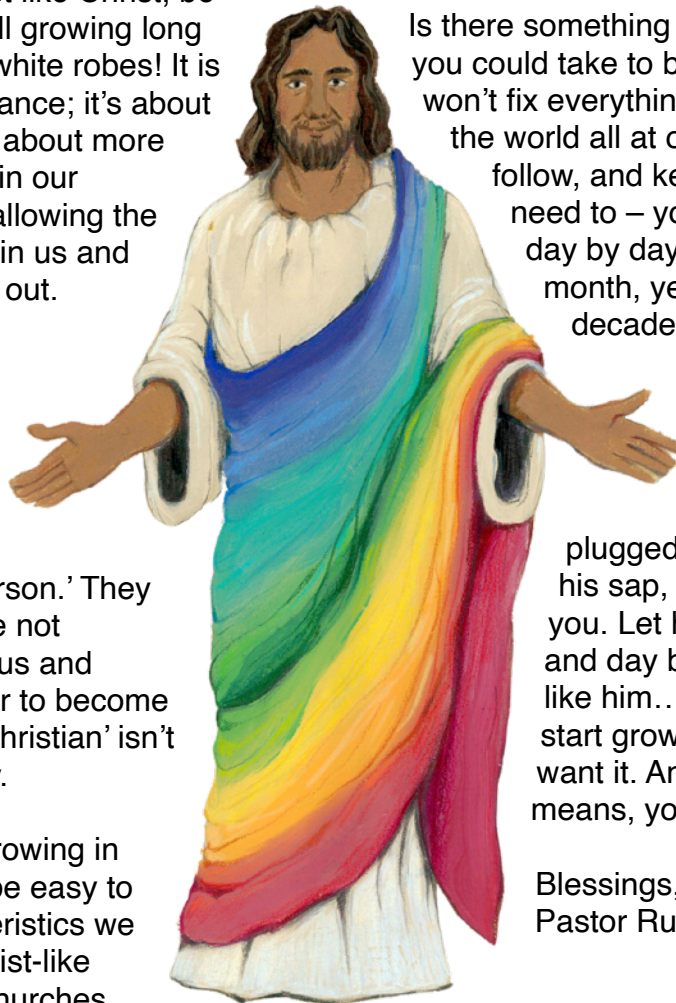
I challenge you to start today. Perhaps there’s some characteristic of Jesus that impresses you. His humility and honesty, his servant heart, his love, his integrity, his perseverance in the face of opposition or discouragement, his faith, or his willingness to accept and offer hospitality to anyone and everyone regardless of all the human prejudices that divide us.

Is there something you could do – one step you could take to become more like that? You won’t fix everything wrong in your life or in the world all at once, but if you start to follow, and keep following, you won’t need to – you can change gradually day by day, week by week, month by month, year by year, decade by decade.

Jesus said, “Remain in me, as a branch remains in a Vine, and you’ll bear fruit.” Stay following, stay plugged in to him like a branch and his sap, his life, will flow through you. Let his Spirit flow through you and day by day you’ll become more like him... I promise. All you need to start growing in Christ-likeness is to want it. And if you understand what it means, you will want it.

Blessings,
Pastor Rushan

*Image of Jesus
by local artist
Erika Pascual,
art student of church
member Reem Bassous.*





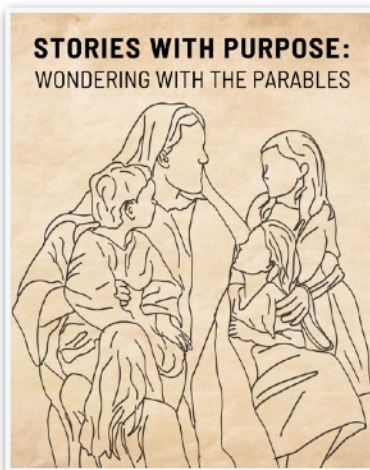
Council Chair Shares

Carl Schlack,
Church Council Chair

Aloha Central Union Church!

I have always been drawn to the parables Jesus used to teach both the people who gathered to hear him speak as well as his disciples. Perhaps it is because they are stories about people like us dealing with situations we can relate to notwithstanding that Jesus was speaking to an audience that lived some 2,000 years ago. Surely, one of the intriguing elements of the parables for me is their enduring relevance to people who live in a very different world 20 centuries removed from the Roman-occupied Holy Land.

Jesus' parables, which are based on every-day occurrences and interactions, teach us to look at events differently (e.g., *"It is fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found"*) and to confront difficult questions (e.g., *"who is my neighbor?"*). They teach us the way of God's grace and abundant love. Pastor Rushan's current sermon series, **"Stories With Purpose: Wondering with the Parables"**, is giving us a fresh look at certain well-known parables. And it is a reminder that even if we think the message in some parables is clear, there is always a deeper meaning worthy of greater examination. They are, after all, **"Stories With Purpose"** and it is worth our effort to discern that purpose.



Of course, we each have our own story. It is the story of our life, the journey we have traveled, how we have come to be the person we are at present. As a diverse community of believers,

we should endeavor to create space and time to listen to each other's story; by listening and trying to understand that story, we will better understand that person. And a better understanding of each other will create greater empathy in us and allow us to appreciate the complexity and beauty in our diversity. After all, since we are made in the image of God (*Imago Dei*), we are all worthy of being heard and understood.

Switching gears to some news from the Council — the Nominations and Governance Committee ("NGC") has been reviewing possible candidates to fill the upcoming vacancies when the current Council finishes its term at the annual Member meeting scheduled for Sunday, September 8, 2024. Due to the expiration of the terms of certain Council members, and a couple resignations, the congregation will be voting to fill the positions of four At Large Council members and three Officer positions. To comply with our Bylaws, the process will proceed as follows: (i) the NGC will submit the candidates it is nominating to the Council for the Council's review, approval, and amendment; (ii) once approved and/or amended by the Council, the list of nominees for Officer and At Large Council member positions will be published to the Church members; and (iii) Church members may then make additional nominations for Officer and At Large Council positions by complying with the requirements of Bylaws Section 4.3.C. So be on the lookout for the list of nominees!

As we head into the longer, brighter days of Summer, allow me to share a quotation from Annie Dillard that has stuck with me since I reheard it the other day: "How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives." My prayer is that you spend your days in ways that are meaningful to you and to your story.

Should you wish to contact me, please email council-chair@centralunionchurch.org.

Mahalo,
Carl Schlack



Hosting the 202nd 'Aha Pae'āina

Our Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ held its annual ['Aha Pae'āina](#) from June 13-15 in person for the first time in five years. Central Union had the honor of hosting—welcoming nearly 200 delegates and visitors from over 100 of our sister churches around the islands. It was a tremendous team effort by church members and staff to prepare the space and provide hospitality to our guests over the three days and the days leading up to it. **A BIG MAHALO** to all the volunteers who shared their time and talents to welcome and greet guests; help with parking, setup, and cleanup; to the Flower Committee that beautified our space and those who donated flowers and food. These contributions helped to make a great gathering for all!

In the many 'Aha celebrations, Central Union Church was recognized as one of the top 10 HCUCC givers of the highest dollar amount, and as one of over 1,000 [donors that contributed to the HCUCC Maui Wildfires Recovery Fund](#). Mahalo for your generosity!

Who is the HCUCC and What Do We Do?

HAWAII CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



WE (local churches, associations, individuals) are ALL part of the Hawai'i Conference, and the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ (HCUCC) CARES! Together, WE: Connect + Advocate + Resource + Embbrace + Serve. Learn more at hcucc.org/cares.

‘Aha Reflections from a Delegate

Martha Balkin, ‘Aha Pae‘āina Delegate



The theme for the 202nd Aha Pae‘āina was “Ho‘āla Hou”, God is Making All Things New, from Isaiah 43:18-19. One hundred seventeen churches from around Hawai‘i gathered at Central Union for the first in-person ‘Aha since 2019.

To say it was a joyous occasion would be an understatement. It was three days filled with singing, praying, discerning, debating, eating, making new friends and reconnecting with old. Throughout, we reflected on acknowledging and recognizing the new thing that God is already doing in our world.

We were asked not to become habituated to our prayers and scripture, but to give these meditations a fresh and in-depth look. The 40 youth in attendance started us off by really examining the Lord’s Prayer, rather than a rote recitation.

In one of our morning worship, it was noted that in the beginning of creation there was Shalom – wholeness, completeness and peace and that we are called to engage in a journey of restoring shalom. To do so does not just require belief and hope that God is making all things new, but to actually step into this journey.

One way this happened was through the adoption of the Resolution of Witness: “A Call to Education and Action Regarding the Crisis in Gaza”. Originally sponsored by six of our churches, this resolution calls on our churches to: (1) Publicly pray and call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire in Gaza and Palestine; (2) Call for an end to the blockades of humanitarian aid preventing critical food and medical supplies from getting into Gaza; (3) Commit to educating ourselves about the history and current conflict in Palestine and Israel.

Shalom.



Photos by Kalani Wong, Maui

CUPS Welcomes New Team Member

Veronique Braithwaite, *Preschool Director*

Dear Friends! I am thrilled to introduce our newest team member, Ms. Alana Anderson who is joining CUPS as the Advancement and Communications Manager! Ms. Alana has varied experience in developments, event planning and fundraising, having worked in both for-profit and non-profit sectors for many years. As our Advancement and Communications Manager, Ms. Alana will be responsible for spearheading CUPS fundraising efforts, enhancing our communication strategies and fostering strong relationships with our community partners. Her expertise will help to advance the CUPS mission, ensuring we continue to provide exceptional early childcare opportunities for keiki and their families. I hope you will join me in welcoming Ms. Alana! She will be a frequent face that children and families will see on campus, in the office, during the morning drop off and/or pick-up times. We are excited to have her on board and look forward to the positive impact she will make for our CUPS community.



The Preschool is still accepting applications to the Preschool Program (3-5 year olds) for the coming 2024–2025 school year which starts August 12, 2024.
centralunionpreschool.org

Hello. Konnichiwa. Annyeong. Aloha CUPS 'Ohana, Faculty, and Friends!

I am Alana Alissa Yoshiko Anderson, and I am very fortunate to be the new Advancement and Communications Manager for CUPS. I can be seen hanging out in Ms. Rene's office or even standing outside to greet all of our amazing students and parents... so please send a "hi" and a wave back to welcome me!

I was born and raised in Wahiawa and attended Brandeis University in Massachusetts, where I learned how much I love the winter and cold. I then spent a few years in Japan teaching English at a small rural village before coming home only to serve as a Princess on the 51st Cherry Blossom Court. After my stint at royalty ☺, I left the island again and moved to New York City, New Jersey, and Virginia/D.C. in which I made career out of development/fundraising and events at various non-profit organizations, including the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) and other health/financial/child and family-oriented associations.

I returned to my birthplace four years ago and have continued in the same fields I have enjoyed and hold a great passion for since my first sponsor agreed to a gift towards an annual conference and expo twenty plus years ago. In my free time, if that does exist, I am enamored with KDramas (Korean Dramas) and K-Pop (Korean Pop) and admittedly, I have not watched an English-speaking TV show or movie for the past 4 years. I adore cats, in addition to reading, shopping, and just being me. And of course, meeting new people and turning them into new friends is a highlight of the work I do. So, thank you for having me and I hope to get to know everyone!

—Ms. Alana



Music Ministry

Margaret Lloyd, *Director of Music Ministries*

In October 2021, CUC's Music Ministries Department introduced a new Choral Scholars program, offering an opportunity for young musicians to serve with our choral ministry. Our Music Ministry, under the leadership of Eleanor Mudrick, *Chair*, enthusiastically supported this new endeavor. We began with four talented students from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, one of whom was Monique Luckett. For the past three seasons, we have been blessed with Monique's vocal leadership as a section leader with the Chancel Choir, a singer with Ke Aloha Pau 'Ole and a gifted soloist.

In May, Monique completed her Bachelor of Education in Music degree at UH Mānoa. She returned for a "congratulatory/farewell Sunday" on May 19 with the Chancel Choir and Ke Aloha Pau 'Ole, under the direction of Sarah Young, *Director of Choirs*, as we celebrated Pentecost and the 100th anniversary of the Sanctuary dedication at a combined worship service.

Our best wishes and Aloha to Monique as she begins a new adventure as Music Teacher at Hickam Elementary School this next school year!



Left to right: Brett Keniston, Monique Luckett, Emmie Siebert, Matt Yamada on Pentecost Sunday, 2024.



Children's Ministry

Cayanna Herrera, *Director of Children's Ministries*

KEIKI QUIPS

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

During our Godly Play storytelling of The Parable of the Sower, I wondered with the children where they were in the story, what part of the story was about them and a 3-year-old CUPS student solemnly responded: "I am the seed."

**May we all seek
to be the seed
today!**



COMPASSION CAMP

SUMMER 2024

July 22-26

9 AM - 12 PM

Central Union Church



God's Global Kids:
Learning to Love the World

- Age 3 – grade 5 welcome!
- \$40 donation suggested



Register online: bit.ly/compassioncamp2024cuc

Compassion Camp is nearing capacity, so if your child would like to attend, please register soon! Sign up your keiki for a week of fun and growth as **"God's Global Kids: Learning to Love the World."**

LOOKING AHEAD

June 22: E-waste Collection
9-11 AM, Punahou Parking Lot

June 30: Intergenerational Worship
7 AM, 9 AM, 11 AM – Keiki in worship
Young(ish) Adults Breakfast Bunch
10-11 AM, Women's Building

Pastor Rushan at Windward
"The Gospel According to Broadway"

June 30: *Les Misérables*

July 7: *Wicked*

July 14: *Fiddler on the Roof*

July 9: Young(ish) Adults Trivia Night
7-9 PM, Honolulu Beerworks

July 14: Christmas in July
10 AM – One in-person service, Sanctuary
Potluck, shave ice, and fun for keiki!

July 22-26: Compassion Camp

July 26-28: Youth Retreat on Kaua'i

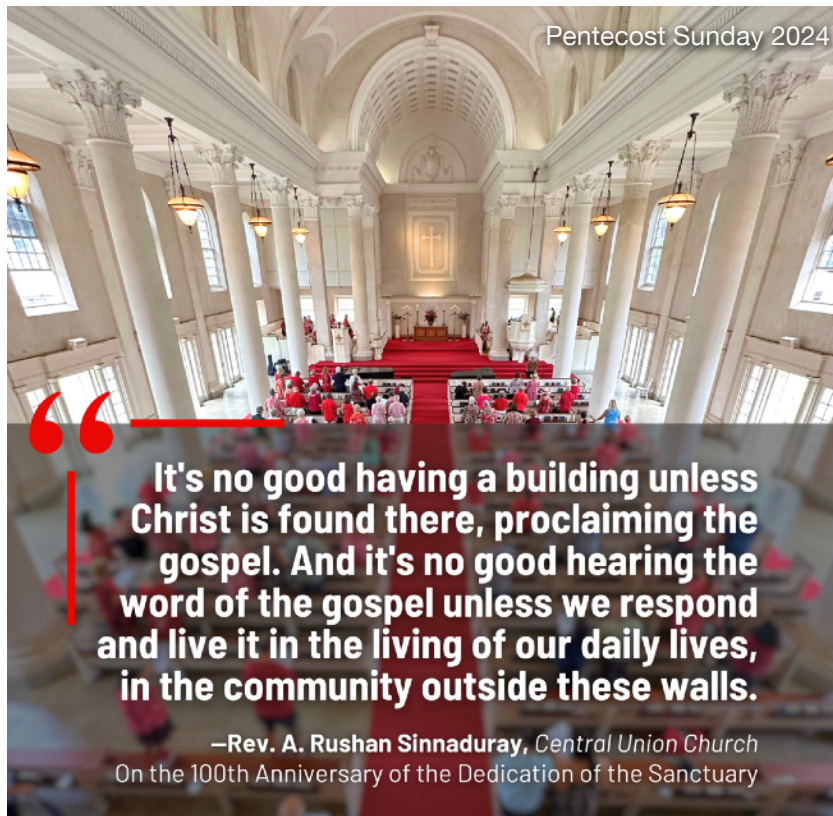
August 11: Back to School Sunday
Young(ish) Adults Outing
Afternoon Polo on the North Shore

September 1: Laity Sunday

September 8: Annual Meeting, 11 AM
10 AM: One in-person service, Sanctuary

September 15: Aloha Sunday
10 AM: One in-person service, Sanctuary

Pentecost Sunday 2024



Remembering Our Saints

Please hold in prayer the family of **Barbara Ching**. She died on May 23, 2024. Services are scheduled for Saturday, June 22nd in the Sanctuary. Visitation is at 10 AM and the service begins at 10:30 AM.

Please also remember in your prayers the family of **Dorry Wollstein**, who died in May 2024. Services are pending.

