

THE SPIRE



The Sanctuary
clock tower lit
up with color,
flashing orange
and purple on
All Hallows' Eve!

Central Union Church and Preschool

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

November 2024

Vol. 94 - No. 11



Pastor's Page: We are stewards of God's world

Rev. A. Rushan Sinnaduray
Senior Minister

We have just completed our annual fall stewardship campaign, where we began the process of working to **"Imagine Together"** what God is calling Central Union Church to be. I wonder what comes to your mind when you hear the word **stewardship**? Maybe the word money or things related to money - giving to the Church, Church budgets, financial targets. Hopefully thoughts about time and talents will feature too. I like to think of stewardship as an invitation to share in living the love of God in our world. Stewardship challenges me to think about what I can offer God anew in order to bring in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.

Christian stewardship was once explained to me in this way - When a charity or organization asks for our support, we are often asked to become donors or patrons and that is a good thing to do. When the Church asks for our support, we are called to be stewards, which is something a little different. A steward is someone who cares for property that is owned by someone else. The property that has been entrusted to us is God's world, and we are called to take care of and manage the world and its resources, in ways that will bring in the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. This is why the Church calls our giving stewardship. We are stewards of God's world and everything in it, so all our giving is in fact a giving back to God what already belongs to God.

Just think about the treasures God has given us, treasures that are not ours to keep or to hoard away, but ours to manage or steward for the short while we are on this earth. And if everything has been given to us by God then it follows that the **time** God has given us needs to be used wisely; the **talents** God has given us need to be engaged to benefit others and to give glory to God; the **treasure** that has been entrusted to us needs to be spent wisely and given responsibly. For it is God's gifts we are using.



Members share dreams and hopes for our church in a Learning Tree session, "Vision 2035 - Discerning Our Calling", with Pastor Rushan on October 27.

Good stewardship then is when we value the things God values and use the resources available to us to bring those values to our lives, our community and God's world.

How much time, energy and money are we investing in furthering God's realm?

In the light of knowing that everything comes from God, we are called to re-evaluate our priorities and redirect our resources to bringing in the realm of God here and now. Something, by the way, we are not expected to do in our own strength but in God's strength.

I firmly believe that the best years of this church are ahead if every single one of us is willing to be a part of the work of renewal. So, as we work to renew, revitalize and rebuild the community of Central Union Church, I invite all of us to reflect on how much time, talent, energy and treasure we are willing to invest in furthering God's realm here and now.

Blessings,
Pastor Rushan



LIVE WORSHIP FROM THE SANCTUARY

We have begun to live-stream our 9 AM traditional worship service on Sunday mornings. Check out our in-person worship service from wherever you are! You can find our live worship videos through our website (centralunionchurch.org) or on our **YouTube channel**: youtube.com/@centralunionchurchhawaii/streams.

Taking PRIDE in Love Which Never Faileth

Kristen Young, *Communications Manager*

Photos by **Samuel Matsuzaki**

“Pride” is a celebration of diversity, equality, affirmation, and love for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+) community which continues to face rejection and discrimination within our society, even condemnation in some churches. While typically held in the month of June in commemoration of the Stonewall riots in 1969 which were pivotal in the movement for gay rights, Hawai‘i celebrates Pride in October, which is also LGBT History Month.



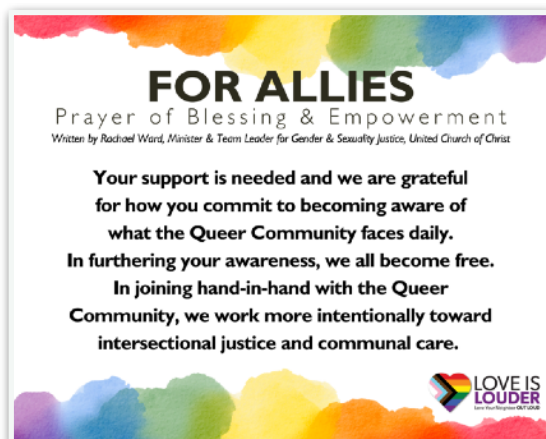
Our Community Ministry participated in the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa LGBTQ+ Center’s annual fair celebrating National Coming Out Day on October 13. Central Union was among more than 25 LGBTQ+ ally organizations present on campus for this event. As a church whose mission is to engage and embrace all, this was an opportunity for us to share with the wider community that Love Never Faileth and that our church is a safe and affirming community for all, including those who identify as LGBTQ+.

“[Glitter blessings](#)” were offered to passersby with words of affirmation reminding individuals that they are beautifully and wonderfully made, cherished and beloved by God. Our friend Jesus was there with us to bring smiles and laughs. We displayed words of blessing for queer youth, elders, ancestors, and allies.

Some may wonder why, as a church, we choose to be out about our support for the LGBTQ+ community — simply put, hate and disapproval can be loud, especially from religious groups, so our love must be louder!

Community Ministry Encouraged Us to Vote with Love

In the 2024 General Election earlier this month, marriage equality was on the Hawai‘i ballot. Our Community Ministry reminded us of the importance of voting with love on a proposed amendment to the Hawai‘i State Constitution which would effectively protect the freedom to marry for same-sex couples. A “yes” vote would support marriage equality, which aligns with Central Union’s stance supporting same-sex marriage voted on by the congregation in 2014. Just over 51% of voters voted in favor of this amendment, allowing it to pass. We celebrate this victory and what it means for our families and friends!



It's Definitely Fall on the CUPS Campus

Alana Anderson, *Advancement & Communications Manager, Central Union Preschool*



To kick off Fall, the PTO invited all CUPS Keiki and 'Ohana to Pumpkin Patch on October 18. Atherton Courtyard was transformed into an autumn wonderland as the grounds were covered with many pumpkins, ready to be picked by a special keiki. Pinwheels spinning in the wind and scarecrows watching the fun festivities added special fall touches. While each child pondered over which pumpkin they would be taking home, there were also games and activities to keep everyone occupied. Keiki used ladles and spatulas to "bob" for apples while others tried their luck at the ring toss, and a scavenger hunt had kids and parents alike searching the courtyard. Each class had an amazing time with family and friends gathered under the tree boughs to celebrate October.



October wouldn't be complete without Halloween! The PTO got creative and organized a Treat Trek on October 25, where family members decorated tables in fun themes, like Disney Castle, complete with Snow White and Elsa (courtesy of Mrs. Braithwaite and Ms. Alana); Pokémon; Mario Brothers, Race Cars, and Superheroes. Keiki walked around Parish Hall, trick or treating at the various tables for candy, giveaways, prizes, and photo opportunities. Mini princesses, Pokémon, Bluey, and other characters had a great time getting rewarded for dressing up! Meanwhile, at the Women's Building, DJ Crichton turned the volume to kid-friendly songs as everyone danced, jumped up and down, and moved to the beat of the music. It indeed was a CUPS Dance Party! To end the evening, keiki paraded across the stage to show their costumes to all.

October was also a time for learning about safety for Fire Awareness Month. The classrooms invited the Honolulu Fire Department Ladder 2 and CUPS firefighter parent Johnny Kawano to give hands-on presentations. Keiki hung out in the fire truck, handled the hose as it gushed water onto the Great Lawn, and watched firefighters change into their gear. The culmination of Fire Awareness Month was our own CUPS fire drill. Everyone followed the instructions as they were led to the classroom's designated "safe zone."

It truly was a month of celebrations, learning opportunities, and a lot of fun for our Keiki and their 'Ohana. Mahalo to the PTO for organizing such amazing events and to our friends at the Honolulu Fire Department.



Youth

Melissa Thach, Youth Director

One of the joys of working with youth is seeing them do the things they love. This past month some of the youth went to support Aran in his school production of 'Mean Girls the Musical' and it was a delight! We made sure to cheer very loudly for him during the curtain call and presented him with traditional (and not so traditional) lei.



Children's Ministry

Cayanna Herrera,
Director of Children's Ministries

What comes to mind when you hear the words 'Godly Play'? At the annual Central Union Church Women's Retreat, those words took on new meaning as the ladies of CUC experienced the power of story, wondering, work time, and feast together, many for the first time. When someone asks me why I enjoy presenting Godly Play to adults, my answer is always the same... because Godly Play isn't just for children! It has been said that we don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing, and I think the same can happen in our faith journey as well. This beautiful way of experiencing the Divine helps us to reconnect with the wonder of childhood while working out our faith, even as adults. In the coming months, we will be inviting more of you to experience Godly Play. In the early part of 2025, we are planning an informational workshop to help both our faith community and other congregations learn more about Godly Play. I hope and pray you will consider coming out for this special presentation. Look out for more information!

Advent is coming! I know that for many children especially, Christmas is the day they most look forward to, but for me, Advent has become such a very special season. These four weeks of preparation just before Christmas (starting on December 1 this year) are so full of joyful anticipation and special traditions! Please join us for our Advent workshop on November 24.

A poster for an 'INTERGENERATIONAL ADVENT WORKSHOP'. It features a dark blue background with a starry night sky and a central illustration of three lit candles on a green base with a star. The text on the poster includes: 'INTERGENERATIONAL ADVENT WORKSHOP', 'Learn more about Advent!', 'Create your own Advent wreath!', 'SUNDAY November 24 10:00-11:00 AM Women's Building', 'Sponsored by Central Union Church Children's Ministry', and 'RSVP online: bit.ly/rsvp2024advent'. There is also a logo for Central Union Church with the text 'LOVE NEVER FAILS!'.

**INTERGENERATIONAL
ADVENT WORKSHOP**

Learn more about Advent!

Create your own Advent wreath!

**SUNDAY
November 24
10:00-11:00 AM
Women's Building**

Sponsored by
Central Union Church
Children's Ministry

RSVP online: bit.ly/rsvp2024advent

Young(ish) Adults



Our young(ish) folks had a spooky time at their Halloween party, complete with fellowship, games, pumpkin decorating, a scary movie, and of course, food! The Young(ish) Adult ministry is thriving! They meet twice a month. Young(ish) Adults are invited to these **upcoming events**:

- ➔ **Sunday, November 17, 10-11 AM**
Brunch Bunch breakfast in Room 201/202
- ➔ **Thursday, November 21**
Pau Hana - location TBD

For more info: youngish@centralunionchurch.org

Birthday Celebrations



Serving Aloha food distribution ~ 4 years!

"Four years later, we are serving more than 2.5 times the households than when we started (October 2020) and our volunteer force has grown accordingly. In celebration of this milestone, Pastor Mary talked about vitality and Pastor Rushan talked about transformation. This vital and vibrant ministry is transforming lives, of those who receive food each week, but equally for those who serve. I felt with this birthday, that as a program we may be a little older and a little wiser, but we still experience the full-on joy of a 4-year-old. I hope we never get too old for that!" –**Martha Balkin**, Serving Aloha Coordinator



Central Union Preschool ~ 96 years!

CUPS celebrated on October 16 in their chapel service led by one of the preschool classes.



35th Annual Women's Retreat

Women's Retreat Planning Team • Our women gathered for the 35th Annual Women's Retreat from November 1-3 at Camp Mokule'ia. It was a joyful and Spirit-filled weekend as we reflected on our "Rainbow of Joyful Connections" – with God, those who came before us, one another, and ourselves. On Saturday, we were able to offer childcare at the church, allowing some of our young moms to join us for the day. What a gift! We are blessed by messages from Sarah Mudrick and Cayanna Herrera and spent time enjoying the beauty of creation together. This year, our team voted to support the [Pū'ā Foundation](#) and through the Women's Retreat offering we collected \$872 for their work of 'Trauma to Transformation' which serves women, girls, and their families, especially Hawaiians, impacted by the legal system. Praise God for a beautiful weekend!

A poem by Marion Lyman-Mersereau

We sing song after song after song
until we feel we all belong
and have willed this place
into a sacred space
with each song selection
another joyful connection is made
meanwhile energy of the eternal sea
becomes known with its regular roar
I find a memory of yore
when Margie Smith
prowled back and forth across this floor
a mama lion with tooth and claw
determined to save her beloved daughter
from what she knew was God's flaw
Margie marches on
yet many founding mothers have joined
her daughter and other sisters and brothers
Joan Africa, Fran Brossy, Vonnice Turner, Lig Power, Martha Lee

the lustre of white breakers
bright in morning sunlight
like long pieces of glossy
crumpled paper --
these waves advance
and do battle against sea walls
they crash then splash skyward
they fall and recede to fight another day
as they grab sand and take it away
holding it hostage from the bay

we navigate curves
formed by bits of broken coral
we walk with awareness
steered to our center

no rainbows arched above the line of horizon
that separates sky from sea
yet other rainbows appeared
in strings of sparkling beads
in tears quietly wiped away
in the work of Godly Play
in smiles and laughter
despite pine cones that poked our tender feet
and shared stories of olive presses
that crush us to the core
we sang song after song after song
we know we all belong



LOOKING AHEAD

November 17: Service of Healing & Prayer
5:30-6:30 PM, Atherton Memorial Chapel

4-SESSION ADVENT STUDY

Nov. 19, Dec. 3, 10, 17
TUESDAYS
6:00 - 7:30 PM

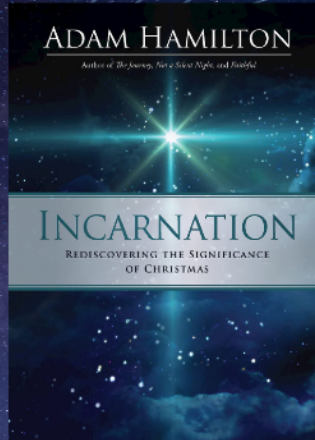
Nov. 21, Dec. 5, 12, 19
THURSDAYS
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Rewick Board Room
Central Union Church



SIGN UP
ONLINE!

bit.ly/advent2024study



FAITH FORMATION
OPPORTUNITY

The war in Gaza didn't start on October 7. Come learn how we got here.

Gaza in International Context

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25
6:30-8:00 PM • Central Union Church



Ibrahim G. Aoudé

Professor Emeritus of Ethnic Studies,
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa;
Editor, Arab Studies Quarterly



Cynthia Franklin

Professor of English,
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa;
Students and Faculty for Justice in Palestine;
Jewish Voice for Peace, Hawai'i Chapter

RSVP encouraged: bit.ly/gazacontext

This is a learning opportunity to faithfully respond to the Resolution of Witness affirmed at the HCUC 'Aha Pae'āina in 2024, '[A Call to Education and Action Regarding the Crisis in Gaza.](#)'

ADVENT 2024 Sermon Series:

December 1: HOPE
"You Are A Blessing"

December 8: PEACE
"We Can't Go Alone"

December 15: JOY
"Do the Good That
Is Yours To Do";
White Gifts Pageant at 9 AM

December 22: LOVE
"Hope Is Worth the Risk"



December 8: Messiah concert, 7:30 PM

December 10: Day of Prayer & Public Witness

The Hawai'i Conference UCC Justice and Witness
Missional Team calls on churches and members to
participate in this observance as a response to the
Resolution of Witness, "[A Call to Education and
Action Regarding the Crisis in Gaza.](#)"



LEARNING TREE

Learn
the skill of
**empathic
listening**
& how to
helpfully
respond
to others.



SUNDAY
NOV 24
10-11 AM

Room 201/202
CENTRAL UNION CHURCH

**"When I Listen, People
Speak and Come Alive:
Empathic Listening"**

w/ Alan Rohlf, psychotherapist &
trainer in Nonviolent Communication

VITAL STATS

Welcome, New Members!

Shayne and Nicole Hubbard joined the church on November 3, 2024.

Remembering Our Saints ~ 13 church members died in the past year

Please hold in prayer the family of **Arlene Koegler** who died on October 13, 2024.

Services were held on October 27 in Atherton Memorial Chapel.



HANDEL'S MESSIAH

FEATURING:

NATALIE MITCHELL,
soprano

A. EZINNE DAWSON,
mezzo soprano

KEITH WALLACE,
tenor

DR. CHRISTOPHER R. KELSEY,
bass

THE HAWAI'I NUI CHORALE

**CHAMBER SINGERS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I
AT MĀNOA**

**MEMBERS OF THE HAWAI'I
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

DR. ALEC SCHUMACKER,
conductor

SUNDAY
DEC. 8
7:30 PM

Central Union Church

1660 S. Beretania Street, Honolulu

**The performance is FREE
and open to the public!**

Donations gratefully accepted.

HAWAI'I

AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION



The **Hawai'i Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association** proudly supports and celebrates Central Union Church's 75th presentation of the *Messiah*.