

# THE SPIRE

A photograph of a group of people, including a young boy in the foreground, holding lit candles during a candlelight service. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the candles. The boy in the foreground is looking towards the camera with a slight smile. Other people are visible in the background, some looking down at their candles and others looking forward. The overall atmosphere is solemn and communal.

2024 Christmas Eve  
Candlelight Service

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

January 2025  
Vol. 95 - No. 1





## Pastor's Page: "We have work to do"

**Rev. A. Rushan Sinnaduray**  
*Senior Minister*

Dear Friends,

Hau'oli Makahiki Hou!

A new year brings new beginnings and the time we may need to reflect and prepare for the days given to us. When I was a child, a year seemed like a pretty long time. A school year was an eternity waiting for the summer to begin. Now that I am slightly older, even in these troubling and challenging times, a year goes by so quickly. Maybe it's the speed that we travel through this life. Perhaps it's the number of activities or accomplishments we try to stack up every day. Whatever the reason, each year passes before we know it.

At this point in my life I have come to realize that the real basis of life does not consist in how many jobs we get done, how many promotions we accumulate, how much money we save or how many things we possess. What gives our lives meaning is our spiritual identity in Christ Jesus. We're created in God's image and are called to share the truth of God's love and our purpose-filled life in Jesus. Loving God and neighbors near and far is what life is all about. Serving God, sharing Jesus, and being guided by the Holy Spirit are the means God has given us to be the church.

As Christ's church, if we're not careful we can so easily lose focus on what is important to God. Our building is a great place to worship and study within. A comfortable building is a great place to share the Good News. If we are going to be intentional about sharing the Gospel and inviting folk to come and worship, come and study, come and be transformed by God's love, we need to reach out in effective and purposeful ways. We need to focus on our own spiritual need to be in worship. We need to pray for new friends and reach out to our siblings who either no longer attend or who attend sporadically.

We are at the beginning of another new year. Time is passing, getting shorter. We have work to do. As the United Methodist Church Pastor, Reverend Mike Slaughter says, "We don't have time to play church!" May we use this year wisely, filling it with good news, great love, and intentionality for Jesus. May we look back on each year and feel good about how we used our time to God's glory.

~ ~ ~

In our first worship series of 2025 during February, we are going to look at "The Gospel According to Broadway". As we explore the ways in which our Still-speaking God continues to reach into our hearts and souls through the medium of Musical Theater and continues to try to teach us new and different ways to share the love and grace of God with the world.

A graphic for the sermon series "The Gospel According to Broadway". It features a red curtain background. The title "The Gospel According to Broadway" is written in a large, stylized font. Below the title, the dates and titles of the four sermons are listed: February 9, Wicked; February 16, Seussical the Musical; February 23, Parade; and March 2, Les Misérables.

SERMON SERIES BY REV. A. RUSHAN SINNADURAY

*The Gospel*  
ACCORDING TO  
**BROADWAY**

FEBRUARY 9  
**WICKED**

FEBRUARY 16  
**SEUSSICAL THE MUSICAL**

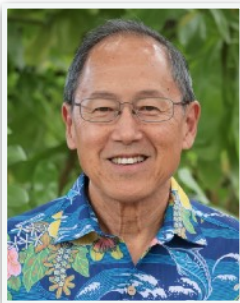
FEBRUARY 23  
**PARADE**

MARCH 2  
**LES MISÉRABLES**

I look forward to seeing you, your friends, and your family in worship, study, and mission!

Blessings and peace,

Pastor Rushan



# Message from Our Church Council Chair

Aloha, Central Union Church!

Happy New Year! I hope your year has gotten off to a great start. The year for the Church Council began at the end of September's combined Annual/Budget Meeting. We decided a

Council retreat led by Pastor Rushan was a good idea in place of an October Council meeting. The following Council members are assigned to support our Church committees/ministries:

**Administration & Finance:** Ciarra Sapigao

**Budget:** Ciarra Sapigao

**Campus Buildings and Grounds:** Sam Failla

**Central Union Windward Ministry:** Janice Wakamatsu

**Community:** Nathan Wong

**Diaconate:** Dusty Santos

**Faith Formation:** Colleen Ho'omana (Adult), Melveen Chun (Children & Youth)

**Investment:** Paul Hayes

**Mind, Body & Spirit Movement:** Carol Egan

**Music:** Jane Fyrberg

**Nominations & Governance:** Carol Egan

**Personnel & Pastoral Relations:** Nathan Wong

**Pohnpeian:** Maurina Ludwig

**Preschool:** David Yee

**Senior Services:** Joan Murata

**Stewardship:** Jane Fyrberg

**Welcome & Engagement (Membership & Fellowship):** Brody McMurtry

**Women's League:** Joan Murata

**World Missions:** Maurina Ludwig

**Our Council meetings are held monthly on the first Thursday of the month at 5:00 p.m. in the Rewick Board Room.** These regular monthly Council meetings are open to all Church members who wish to attend as an observer.

## 2025 CHURCH COUNCIL MEETINGS

FIRST THURSDAYS @ 5 PM

1 JANUARY 9	7 JULY 3
2 FEBRUARY 6	8 AUGUST 7
3 MARCH 6	9 SEPTEMBER 4
4 APRIL 3	10 OCTOBER 2
5 MAY 1	11 NOVEMBER 6
6 JUNE 5	12 DECEMBER 4

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). You may also contact your council members directly for their given areas.

With the organization of the Council completed, another significant council action has been the ongoing discussion on a proposal by Arcadia Retirement Residence (ARR) to restructure Arcadia. If we agree with their proposal, it would result in ending our status as the Sole Member of Arcadia which was incorporated in 1987 as a Sole Member corporation. Arcadia's proposal can have significant long-term ramifications to our church. What those consequences are and how it affects both Arcadia and Central Union are being explored. We have a meeting with Arcadia later this month to continue the discussion.

The Real Estate Committee (REC) has reorganized with Carl Schlack as the new chair. He is organizing the next committee meeting for late January or early February. The success of the REC would provide a future revenue stream that our church needs. Let's keep the REC in our prayers.

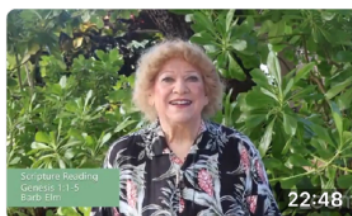
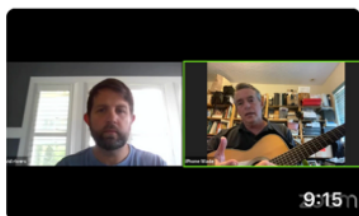
Speaking of revenue streams, we have other ideas in mind. It started with a request to Senior Pastor Rushan and Chief Operations Officer Troy Tomita to submit a list of concerns they would like to see this Council take on. Vice Chair Brody McMurtry and I will be meeting with Pastor Rushan in the coming weeks to prioritize the list. Once this happens, our Council members will form teams to address the projects emerging from the list. The list contains both broad and specific ideas. I see the revenue enhancement concerns floating to the top. Thus, the Council's efforts will be addressing these projects for the remainder of the year.

Mahalo,

**David Yee**  
Council Chair



# Evolution of Our Online Worship



## Kristen Young, Communications Manager

The COVID pandemic challenged us to adapt. When we were unable to gather safely in person, we quickly pivoted and did our best to continue worship through virtual platforms. The first online worship service was on Facebook live from the



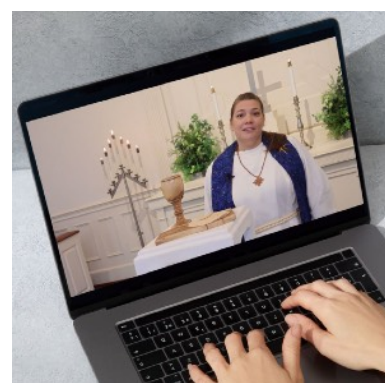
manse with no effects or edits. Then we went live through Zoom with ministers and members at home on their devices in real time. Then we began producing fully prerecorded

services with video clips and music, pre-packaged and shared live through Zoom and Facebook on Sunday mornings.

*Many thanks to ALL who have participated in our online worship services over the years by doing a reading or tuning in!*



Our online worship service evolved with the resources we had available. It was thoughtfully molded for the virtual setting to engage those that couldn't make it to campus on Sunday morning or those who might've felt unsure about the whole church thing but need prayer and a good word nonetheless. Our final (for now) prerecorded online worship service came at the close of the Advent season with a virtual Christmas Eve service.



Since October 2024, we have been regularly live-streaming our 9 AM traditional service from the Sanctuary! This will now be our main online worship offering in large part thanks to Pastor Rushan along with staff member Cory Taylor with initial assistance from Karl Hedberg and support from our Buildings and Grounds

Committee who've all worked hard to make live streaming from our 100-year-old Sanctuary possible. We hope this transition to a fully LIVE-streamed worship model will allow folks near and far to feel more connected to our church and lead to a greater sense of belonging and unity within our worshiping community.



Thank you for bearing with us as we work to improve our live stream worship experience!

You can worship with us via the 9 AM Sunday live stream on our [YouTube channel](#). View it live or view the recording later. Contact the Church Office ([cuc@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:cuc@centralunionchurch.org) / 808-440-3014) if you have any questions or need assistance accessing the live stream.





## Keiki Corner

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

What a special service we experienced on Christmas Eve for our 5:30 Family Service! Our service was interactive in a new way with congregation members joining our living Nativity scene. With plenty of time for singing and a beautiful retelling of the story by Carl and Maya Schlack, we celebrated the arrival of the Christ Child in joyous fashion!



As we move into the new year, we have several upcoming opportunities to learn more about Godly Play. In the coming weeks, we will be announcing a Godly Play informational session as well as storyteller training sessions in the spring. Keep watching for more details!

## CU Youth

**Melissa Thach,**  
*Youth Director*

December is a busy month for students but the CU Youth managed to decorate the youth room for Christmas, have a Christmas party complete with a pasta bar and games, saw Moana 2 in theaters, and ended the year skating at Ice Palace. Later this month (January 18-20) we are headed to Kaua'i for our Confirmation Retreat part 2 (rescheduled from the summer). Our annual Punahou Carnival parking fundraiser is coming up on February 7-8. We'd like to extend an invitation to anyone who would like to volunteer for this event that will fund special events, trips, and student-led philanthropic projects.



## Holiday Happenings



We saw the return of the "Christmas Open House" tradition of welcoming all for a time of yummy holiday treats and fellowship. Thanks to the Welcome & Engagement Ministry who made it possible and brought Christmas cheer!



This Advent and Christmas season, we had 19 services. Thanks to the many folks who helped out as greeters, readers, candle lighters, ushers, florists, singers, and more!





## Walking in a winter wonderland...

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

As we like to say, it's always a beautiful day on the CUPS campus and with Hawai'i's "winter season" in full effect, our CUPS keiki had a lot to look forward to this past December! Although we may not be able to enjoy a white Christmas, our PTO made this a memorable and joyous time for all.

Whether you're enjoying 80-degree days or bundling up against a backdrop of snow, December wouldn't be complete without a visit from Santa Claus. The PTO made sure that our own Hawaiian Santa paid a visit to campus, complete with a surprise element to follow. On December 6, Santa's Wonderland descended upon campus as the Parish Hall was transformed into a scene straight from the North Pole with falling snowflakes projected onto the large screen, a lovely storybook house, and Christmas tree bearing gifts of all sorts. Each classroom had a special visit with Santa Claus and his merry elves as they sang Christmas carols, listened to a story read by Santa himself, and took group photos with our ukulele-strumming Hawaiian Claus.



But this was just the beginning of the fun and excitement. No Santa's Wonderland is complete without a magical workshop bearing treats for all of our amazing CUPS boys and girls. Keiki were then led into a room where a dozen-plus stuffies awaited their new owners as each child was able to pick and choose their own character, from calico teddy bears to fluffy puppies, lions and tigers, oh my! But the best part of it all? The children had the opportunity to actually build their custom stuffie, thanks to Teddy Bear Mobile Hawaii. Each plushie was filled with stuffing and a personal memento

sealed with a hug and a kiss and outfitted with a custom CUPS t-shirt. To end the day of wonders, keiki enjoyed homemade cookies and hot cocoa provided by our fabulous Chef Kat. From a visit with Santa, to visiting his workshop, to making a new friend, our CUPS keiki truly had a magical and special day just for them.

We can't wait for everything that 2025 has to bring!







## Happy Retirement!

**Congratulations to Jane Nagel** (left) on her retirement from Central Union! Jane grew up in this church and first joined our staff in 1976. She has served in a variety of capacities for a total of about 32 years! For the past 14 years, Jane has been our Funeral Coordinator, representing the church with patience and grace while accompanying countless grieving families. We give thanks for Jane's ministry and wish her a restful and enjoyable retirement! While Jane is stepping down from this position, she plans to remain a very active member of Central Union, so we will still get to see her around the church. We will have a small celebration for Jane on an upcoming Sunday morning. Taking on the position of Funeral Coordinator is another church member, Martha Balkin (right), who can be reached at [funerals@centralunionchurch.org](mailto:funerals@centralunionchurch.org).



## Read the Washington Report

A church member has gifted Central Union a subscription to the [Washington Report on Middle East Affairs](#), a 76-page magazine published 7-8 times per year in Washington, D.C., that focuses on news and analysis from and about the Middle East and U.S. policy in that region. It is published by the American Educational Trust (AET), a non-profit foundation incorporated in D.C. by retired U.S. foreign service officers to provide the American public with balanced and accurate information concerning U.S. relations with Middle Eastern states. This educational resource has been gifted to help combat the misinformation in the United States about the Middle East. The resolution "[A Call to Education and Action Regarding the Crisis in Gaza](#)" encourages us to learn more. Anyone interested in viewing the publication is welcome to come and read it at the Church Office and even borrow it to read more at home. Digital versions may also be accessed [online through wrmea.org](http://online.through.wrmea.org).



## SCHOLARSHIPS



## Scholarship Opportunities

The Central Union Church Women's League is accepting applications for two scholarships to support students pursuing higher education. Awards in previous years ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,000, and prior recipients may reapply. (Award amounts may vary annually at the discretion of the Women's League.)

### Kenneth O. and Doris A. Rewick Educational Aid Fund

Open to Hawai'i students enrolled or planning to enroll in accredited undergraduate, graduate, or specialized training programs beyond high school. Full-time, part-time, and online students are eligible.

### Ruth C. Scudder Scholarship

Awarded to female students from Hawai'i with a Christian affiliation enrolled in the University of Hawai'i system. Preference is given to United Church of Christ (UCC) members and upperclassmen.

### HOW TO APPLY

- ➡ Applications are accepted exclusively through ScholarsApp. Visit [ScholarsApp.com](http://ScholarsApp.com) to create an account and access more information.
- ➡ The application deadline is **February 28, 2025**. For questions, email [cucwlscholarship@gmail.com](mailto:cucwlscholarship@gmail.com).

## LOOKING AHEAD

**January 9: Church Council Meeting**

**January 18-20:** Youth on Kaua'i

**January 19:** *Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday & Celebration of 50+ Year Members*

10 AM - Young(ish) Adults **Brunch Bunch gathering**

5:30 PM - **Service of Healing and Prayer**

**January 29:** Kalaupapa Sunday (Hawai'i Conference)  
*January is Kalaupapa Month in Hawai'i*

**January 29:** Young(ish) Adult **Dinner Church**

*February is Black History Month*

**February 2: Jazz Vespers** - Atherton Courtyard  
Special theme for February!

**February 6: Church Council Meeting**

**February 7-8:** Youth Punahou Carnival **parking fundraiser** on the Great Lawn

NO Service of Healing and Prayer in February

**"The Gospel on Broadway" sermon series**

**February 9** *Wicked*

**February 16** *Seussical the Musical*

**February 23** *Parade*

**March 2** *Les Misérables*

### **Season of Lent**

**March 5** Ash Wednesday

**April 13** Palm Sunday

**April 17** Maundy Thursday

**April 18** Good Friday

**April 20** Easter Sunday

## SERVICE of HEALING & PRAYER



**THIRD SUNDAYS • 5:30-6:30 PM**  
ATHERTON MEMORIAL CHAPEL, CENTRAL UNION CHURCH

## ‘UKULELE CLASSES

Students from the ‘Ukulele Class offered back in the fall are still strumming along! Beginner ‘ukulele players from keiki to kūpuna are welcome to come and learn from Wade Cambern who is freely sharing his love of music through teaching ‘ukulele.

Bring your own ‘ukulele and come learn to play!

**Sundays 1-2 PM**  
*Women's Building*



## VITAL STATS

~ Remembering our Saints ~

Please hold in prayer the family and friends of **Christopher "Kit" Smith**, who died on December 27, 2024. Services are pending.

**Children baptized into the universal church and body of Christ in December 2024:**

Beau Brooks Gamble, Adeline Suji Liao-Nam, Emmeline Rui Liao-Nam, Kaipo Kaumana Hanson, Skylar Hope Olivas

