

Pictured: Member
Pauli Tashima shares
a story with children
during the Time for
Keiki on Laity Sunday.

THE SPIRE





The Breath of the Church

Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray

Senior Minister

Aloha, Central Union 'ohana,

The trade winds are blowing. The seasons are shifting. It is a natural time to pause and reflect.

From time to time I hear from some about the quiet anxiety they feel about the future of the Christian church. They read the headlines. They see the changing world. It is easy to worry that our faith communities are somehow fading away.

The late author Phyllis Tickle used to say that about every five hundred years, the Church feels compelled to hold a giant rummage sale. We happen to be living right in the middle of one. We are letting go of stiff corporate expectations. We are clearing out the clutter. We are making room for something new and beautiful to breathe.

For a long time, the modern church got caught up in a numbers game. We started believing that bigger buildings and massive budgets were the only true signs of a living spirit. But vitality is not a math problem. It is much more like the deep roots of a banyan tree. The strength is not just in the massive canopy. It is found in the life pulsing below the surface.

Leadership expert Carey Nieuwhof gives us a vital and timely warning here. He notes that churches that love their model more than their mission will die. It is a sharp but necessary truth. We cannot fall in love with the way things used to be. We have to fall in love with the actual people right in front of us. Our mission is to love God and love our neighbors. The models and methods are simply the things we are reorganizing in our giant rummage sale.

We saw this mission come alive on August 23 at our Time and Talent Fair. The room was buzzing with energy and joy. It was a beautiful reminder that our true strength lies in our shared service. When you volunteer your time and your talents, you become the very heartbeat of Central Union.

That heartbeat takes many beautiful forms. It looks like mentoring our youth through the complex seasons of growing up. It looks like sitting down and sharing stories with our keiki. It sounds like singing in the choir, and helping lead our worship. It is the steady and vital work of feeding the hungry and reaching out to the wider community in love. It is the simple and profound act of welcoming people at the sanctuary doors. Sharing your time and talent by serving in any of these roles, is not just about filling a spot on a schedule. It is about shaping souls. It is about holding space for our neighbors and the next generation to ask hard questions and find real love. Every time you step up to serve, you matter. You are essential.

Jesus always cared more about presence than performance. In the Gospel according to Matthew, he makes a quiet and profound promise. He says, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Notice what Jesus does not require. He does not ask for a massive crowd. He does not demand packed pews or a dazzling show. The sacred is found in the simple moments. It happens when we share our stories. It happens in the quiet courage of our community.

We are freed to embrace the future when we stop trying to maintain the machinery of the past. Cameron Trimble says our true work right now is not to chase imagined glory days. Our job is to unleash the amazing life-giving power of grace, forgiveness, community, hope and love that has always been the mission of the church.

As we move through September and October, I invite you to take a deep breath. Let go of the heavy worldly expectations. Let us find the holy in the simple cadence of our care for one another. The Spirit is steadfast.

The church is alive. It is breathing. It is beautiful.

In gratitude for the ministry we share together,

Pastor Rushan

Time and Talent Fair



Our stewardship season concluded with an exciting Time and Talent Fair on August 23rd! As we consider our financial commitments to this community and make an Estimate of Giving, we are called not only to share our financial resources—our “treasure”—but also our time and talents. The Fair showcased dozens of photos highlighting CUC’s various ministries, the ways time and talents are being shared among us. Handcrafted pillars symbolized the four pillars of Pastor Rushan’s strategic plan for the church: 1) Worship and Music, 2) Faith Formation & Growth, 3) Radical Hospitality, 4) Living Out Faith. Fresh popcorn and cotton candy, ice cream and balloons added to the atmosphere. All were invited to see where and how their time and talents could be used at Central Union and could get more involved by learning of opportunities and signing up to participate in the different committees and activities in the life of our church. Mahalo to the Welcome & Engagement Ministry for hosting such a successful event! A BIG mahalo to Barb and Joe Elm for all their work planning and preparing for the fair.

Keiki Corner

Cayanna Herrera, *Director of Children's Ministries*

Children's Ministry is a happening place! Recently, in addition to starting our new program year with our Godly Play stories, we celebrated the start of the school year with our annual Backpack Blessing and helped to host our first Messy Church event of the program year. We explored how Every Living Thing Needs A Fresh Start and did activities like making our own pizzas for dinner, creating pet toys and bookmarks from recycled materials, and starting the process of rooting cuttings from our basil plant as well as creating deeper connections with our preschool

families, some of whom joined us and were so excited to experience Messy Church. **Our next Messy Church event is scheduled for November 18**, from 5-7 PM. Our theme will be Every Living Thing Needs Time to Get Ready and we will be preparing for Advent by creating our family Advent wreaths, creating cards for our homebound church members, and other Advent activities. **Remember, Messy Church isn't just for kids!** It is fun for the whole family, from keiki to kupuna, and we hope you will join us to deepen friendships new and old through this fun and formative event!



Laity Sunday

We celebrated Laity Sunday in worship on September 6th! This is the Sunday when our lay leaders, as opposed to clergy, lead us in worship. Here at Central Union Church, we believe that our ministers are every one of our members. God speaks and works through each person. Not only do we each have the ability, we also have the responsibility to share in ministry and minister to others in our own unique way.

This Laity Sunday we had the opportunity to hear from Brody McMurtry, current Church Council Vice Chair and Council Chair-elect. He shared about the welcome and sense of belonging he's felt in his ten years at CUC.

"But belonging is only the beginning of community. Once we've been welcomed to the table, we have to learn how to sit at that table with each other." Inspired by the sharing from a fellow Council Member (Treasurer Brandon Lin), Brody reflected on the calls to Engage and Embrace all stated in our mission: **"We Engage and Embrace ALL as we seek to Embody Christ!"** He noted, "Our differences are not a problem to eliminate. They are a part of what makes the body whole. The challenge is not to remove disagreement. The challenge is to remain connected through it. And that is where our work matters." [The full sermon and service can be viewed on YouTube.](#)



Mahalo to our many lay leaders... from those who lend a hand and voice in worship, to those who make plans and preparations, to those who volunteer week after week, to those who serve on the Council. As shared in the sermon, you are part of what makes the body of Central Union Church whole.



A Final Word from Our Council Chair

David Yee, *Church Council Chair 2024-2026*

As I come to the end of my term as Church Council Chair, I am filled with gratitude. This past year has gone by quickly, and I am thankful for the opportunity to serve Central Union Church and to work alongside so many faithful and dedicated people.

There have been many accomplishments and challenges throughout the year, but what stands out most to me is the spirit of generosity, service, and commitment that continues to strengthen our church. From caring for our children and youth to supporting our ministries, facilities, and wider community, so many people have contributed their time, talents, and resources.

I am especially grateful for the trust you placed in me and for the friendships and relationships that have grown through this experience. Serving as Council Chair has been a privilege and a blessing.

As I step away from this role, I encourage others to consider how they might serve. Our church needs all of us. Whether through a committee, a ministry, volunteering, or simply reaching out to someone who may feel disconnected, each of us has something to offer.

May we continue to engage and embrace all, welcoming others and building a church where everyone has a place and a part to play.

**Mahalo nui,
David, for
your years
of service
on Council!**

REMINDER!

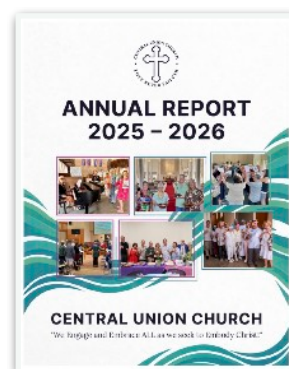
Annual Member & Budget Meeting

**Sep. 13, 2026
@ 11 AM**

following the 10 AM worship service
Parish Hall & Zoom

Following ONE in-person worship service at 10 AM in the Sanctuary, we will gather for the 2026 **Annual Member and Budget Meeting** on Sunday, September 13, 2026, at 11 AM in the Parish Hall (and Zoom). More information was emailed to members. Contact the Church Office (808-440-3014) if you have questions prior to the meeting. **Please plan to attend as we reflect, look forward, and do the shared business of our church together!**

Meeting materials (including the 2025-2026 Annual Report and Budget FYE 7/31/27) are available online: bit.ly/cumtg2026 Hard copies may be requested as needed.



THIS MONTH



Welcoming Our New Associate Minister

Rev. Irene Willis Hassan will be joining the Central Union Church family as our new Associate Minister! Pastor Irene is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. She brings a deep commitment to ministry that is rooted in aloha, engages multiple generations, and constantly expands our capacity for welcome. Irene and her husband, Hamza, have three children ranging from age 1 to 10. Pastor Irene most recently served as the Senior Pastor at Kailua Christian Church. She has a gift for helping congregations navigate differences safely, respectfully, and productively. Her years of experience as a chaplain for The Institute for Human

Services (IHS) means she knows how to sit with people through the hardest parts of life, offering genuine spiritual care and counseling.

With Pastor Irene on board, our preaching rotation will also get a whole lot richer! She will be providing a steady, grounding presence on Sunday mornings at our Windward campus (CUW) and will also have the opportunity to step into the pulpit at our Honolulu campus to share her own vibrant voice and vision often. It's a true win-win, ensuring both of our campuses get to be nurtured by the unique spiritual gifts and styles of our two ministers. To make sure she stays closely connected to folks at both locations, Pastor Irene will have a dedicated office on both campuses where she will divide her schedule each week. Please help welcome Pastor Irene and her family as they join our faith 'ohana.

- ◆ **September 16:** Pastor Irene's **first day** at Central Union Honolulu
- ◆ **September 20:** Pastor Irene's **first Sunday** in the pulpit at Central Union Windward + **Aloha Sunday** featuring E Ho'onani i Ke Akua Me Ka Hula halau

Pastor Irene has already begun working on an exciting Halloween event that will take place on the Windward campus! Volunteers are needed to host a Biblical Haunted House that will be open to the community on October 30. If you've got Halloween spirit and some time to help out, come on over to the Windward side and join the fun!



**BOOMERS
& BEYOND**

Join the first gathering!
September 15
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Women's Building



Calling Boomers & Beyond

If you're a senior (or know one) who's interested in connecting with others and participating in leisure pastimes, learning something new or sharing a hobby, come to our gathering of Boomers & Beyond! Central Union will begin offering seniors an opportunity for weekly social gatherings to share in activities of interest. The invitation is open to all, so feel free to bring a friend or tell the beloved boomers in your life.

The first gathering will be on **Tuesday, September 15**, from 11:30 AM to 1 PM in the Women's Building. Bring lunch for yourself, and a board game if you like. Beverages will be provided.
Please call/text Ronny Lynn (808-391-2733) to RSVP.

COMING UP: OCTOBER OPPORTUNITIES



OCT. 4 – We're celebrating World Communion Sunday and the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi with a blessing of pets after each worship service on October 4 and a pūpū potluck from 10-11 AM in the Women's Building. There will also be an art show in the building to feast your eyes on! Bring your pet to be blessed, check out our talented CUC artists, and make a plate!



OCT. 17 – Central Union is partnering with seven sister churches to participate in this year's Honolulu Pride Parade through Waikīkī. Ride the trolley (space is limited) or march alongside, being loud and proud about God's love for ALL! *More info to come.*



OCT. 30 @ Central Union Windward – Step inside the spookiest scenes from the Bible that'll have you saying OMG! **Admission: \$5 CASH** at the door. More info: bit.ly/haunt26cuw **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!**



Have you ever wondered what the earliest followers of Jesus actually heard when they first gathered to hear his story? Unlike the longer, more structured Gospels, the Gospel According to Mark is short, breathless, and urgent. It offers a raw, powerful look at what it truly means to follow in "The Way."

This October, you're invited to a **three-week Bible study to explore the Gospel of Mark**. This study is designed for those who appreciate honest conversation, progressive perspectives, and a desire to connect their lifelong faith with the reality of their lives today. Rather than focusing on complex doctrine, we will focus on metanoia, which is the "180-degree turn" of life, and what it means to live as disciples in a world that is often fast-paced and mysterious.

WHY JOIN?

Deepen Your Faith: Engage with the earliest Gospel through a lens that honors both history and personal experience. **Build Community:** Share in meaningful, safe, and open-hearted dialogue with friends and neighbors. **Refresh Your Perspective:** Connect the ancient, urgent call of Jesus to your own journey of faith, service, and transition.

Whether you have studied scripture for decades or are simply looking for a meaningful way to reconnect with the core of the Christian narrative, there is a place for you at this table. We look forward to embarking on this journey of rediscovery together.

Give Aloha in September



It's September, which means it's time to Give Aloha at Foodland!

During the month of September, you can go to any Foodland cash register to make a donation with cash/check/card naming any participating nonprofit organization as the recipient. Foodland will match a portion of each gift made by enrolled Maika'i members (free to join at any Foodland)!

Central Union Church - 78511 Central Union Preschool - 78270

Through Foodland's Annual Community Matching Gifts Program, Give Aloha, you can donate any amount, up to a total of \$249 (per person, per participating organization) and your chosen organization will get even more in return.

Please consider paying any part of your pledge/offering, or make an extra donation, through Give Aloha this September – and make your money go further!

Submit your receipt to the Church Office by mail or in the offering plate to get credit on your giving statement.

LOOKING AHEAD

CHANCEL CHOIR (sings in the 9 AM service)
Musicians of all levels are welcome to join!
Rehearsals on Thursdays @ 6:30-7:30 PM
• **October 29: Messiah** rehearsals begin, 6 PM
Contact: Sarah-Young@centralunionchurch.org

'Ukulele class is in session!

Sundays from 1-2 PM - Women's Building

Beginner players of all ages are welcome to come and learn from Wade Cambern. Bring your own 'ukulele and join the musical fun.



Reclaiming Our Faith – Book Study continues

2 options each week: Tuesday evenings (thru 9/22)
or Thursday mornings (thru 9/24)

September 13: ONE worship service @ 10 AM
Annual Member & Budget Meeting to follow

September 15: Boomers & Beyond first gathering

September 16: Pastor Irene's first day!

September 20: Aloha Sunday (Honolulu & Windward)
+ Royal Court present at 9 AM worship service;
+ Pastor Irene's first Sunday at CUW @10 AM

September 25: Troop 777 Scouts Open House
6:30-8:00 PM - CUC Music Building

September 26: Women's League meeting
10 AM - Women's Building / Zoom

September 30: NO Serving Aloha food distribution

October 4: World Communion Sunday
Pet Blessing @ 7 AM, 9 AM, 11 AM services
Pūpū Potluck, CUC art show @ 10-11 AM
Jazz Vespers @ 5:30 PM

October 13 & 15: 3-week Bible Study begins
Tuesday evening & Thursday morning options

October 17: Honolulu Pride Parade
3 PM @ Magic Island to Kapi'olani Park

October 30: Biblical Haunted House
7-9 PM @ Central Union Windward

~ We Remember our Saints ~

Catherine Victor died on August 10, 2026.

Will Brown died on September 5, 2026.

Please keep their families in prayer.