

LOVE NEVER FAILETH

Photo by Luke Magelssen

On World Communion
Sunday, the Chancel
Choir, Pohnpei Ministry
Choir, and keiki joined
together in song!

THE SPIRE



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

October 2026
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Pastor's Page: Children of the Light

Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray,
Senior Minister

Friends,

One of my favorite writers, Frederick Buechner, once observed, "Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid." When we look around at a world defined by division, distracted by despair, and drowning in deep anxiety, those words ring out with a profound, prophetic power. We wonder how to hold onto hope when the headlines are heavy, how to find faith when the future is fractured, and how to love when the light seems lost. Yet, the beauty of our calling is that we are not asked to pretend the darkness does not exist; we are called to be the dawn that breaks the dark.

This fall, our sermon series is entitled, "Children of the Light" and we will be immersing ourselves in the sweeping, sustaining themes of Paul's 1st Letter to the Thessalonians. This is likely Paul's earliest surviving letter, written to a young, anxious church facing persecution and wondering about the future. Our worship will focus on how to live as an authentic, hopeful, and deeply connected Christian community in a world marked by anxiety and division. Paul's message to them is not a call to retreat; it is a call to radiate. He calls believers "children of the light and children of the day".

To be children of the day means we must refuse to sleep-walk through a season of challenge and struggle. In a world that often feels dark or spiritually asleep, we are called to be awake, sober-minded, and busy encouraging one another and building each other up.

So, what does it mean for Central Union to be fully awake? It means cultivating a faith that resounds. Paul praises the Thessalonians because their "work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope"

has echoed out to the surrounding regions. We must ask ourselves the same piercing questions: What is the reputation of our church in the community? Does our hope ring out? Does it resonate in the streets of Honolulu and beyond? It is easy to show up on a Sunday, smile politely, and slip quietly out the doors. But a faith that truly rings out cannot stay on the surface. To be an authentic, hopeful, and deeply connected Christian community, we have to move past polite small talk. We cannot simply pass along theology; we must pass along our hearts.

Paul understood this deeply. He gently reminded the Thessalonians that he didn't just deliver the Gospel to them, but he offered "our own selves, because you had become very dear to us".

Authentic church life demands genuine openness and vulnerability. It asks us to put down our armor and let others see us as we truly are. This is my loving challenge to you, Central Union: step out of the safe shadows of isolation. We must lean in, carry one another's burdens, and be willing to be known. We must share our triumphs, share our tears, and share our very selves. Because being a church is not just about sharing truth; it is about sharing life.

When we bravely open our lives to one another, the light we carry multiplies. Our solitary sparks gather into a fierce and faithful flame. We become a true sanctuary—not merely a building constructed of wood and stone, but a living, breathing home built on shared stories and steadfast support.

Therefore, my friends, let our hope be heard. Let our faith be fearless. Let our love be lived. Let us be a people who look at the beautiful and terrible world and answer it with an audacious, unyielding light. Let us wake up, let us reach out, and let us walk together in the light.

In gratitude for the ministry we share,

Pastor Rushan



A Month of Gratitude and Possibility

Rev. Irene Willis Hassan, *Associate Minister*

Thank you, Central Union Church! I am so deeply grateful for the gracious welcome I have received. Joining a new church community is always an experience of learning—new faces, new traditions, new stories, and new ways of being together. But even in these first few weeks, I have found so much to be inspired by.

I want to offer particular thanks to Shirley and Evy, who helped make our Tea & Talk Story gathering such a welcoming experience; to Barb and Ruth Ann, whose cheerful presence at the office door has made coming to work a joy; and to Melinda and Carolynn, whose commitment to serving our wider community through meaningful initiatives has already left an impression on me. I was also struck by Karl's enthusiasm for sharing the rich history of Central Union Church, and by the thoughtful, hardworking staff who do so much behind the scenes to support its ministries.

At our Tea & Talk Story gathering on October 11, I was humbled and proud to hear about the many things that excite people about Central Union. From Carol's Centering Prayer Group to the friendships and sense of belonging people have found here, it was clear that this congregation has much to celebrate. I was especially moved by the affection people expressed for one another and the ways this church has become a meaningful part of their lives.

Many of you were also curious about my background and my hopes for our future together. I shared that I am excited to support Pastor Rushan's vision of reaching further into our community through joyful and creative ministries like Messy Church and Jazz Vespers. These programs bring people of different generations and backgrounds together to experience the joy and wonder that God intends for our lives.

Pastor Rushan has already been accompanying this congregation through important conversations about its sacred *why*: who we are, what we value, and what we uniquely offer to the community around us. I look forward to continuing those

conversations and exploring together how we might help people who encounter Central Union through our many community programs find deeper connections within the life of the church.

One possibility that excites me is the idea of small *hui*, or connection groups, built around the interests and passions already present in our congregation. Rather than adding more committees or responsibilities, these could simply be welcoming circles where people get to know one another, share their interests, and build friendships. After all, belonging often begins with something as simple as a familiar face, a shared conversation, or someone who remembers your name. Over time, those relationships can become bridges into a deeper experience of Christian community.

Of course, these are just possibilities to explore together over time. For now, I am enjoying learning about the ministries, traditions, and passions that make Central Union unique. I would love for you to come tell me about them! You can usually find me in the office on **Tuesdays from 8:30 AM to 1:30 PM and the second and fourth Wednesdays from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM** Please feel free to stop by and share a story.

Central Union Church holds a remarkable place in the history of O'ahu. As one of the island's oldest congregations, its story is woven into the very fabric of our community. We have every reason to be proud of that history, and every reason to be hopeful about its future. We are blessed to be stewards of both.

I am grateful to be joining you in this chapter of Central Union's story, and I look forward to discovering together what God has in store.

With aloha and gratitude,

Pastor Irene



Real Estate Committee Update

Carl Schlack, *Real Estate Committee*

The Real Estate Committee (“**REC**”) for Central Union Church (the “**Church**”) was formed in 2023 after the Congregation voted to allow the use of available areas on our Honolulu and Windward campuses to generate revenue needed to address not only the Church’s current financial challenges but also revenue sufficient for the continuation of the Church and its missions throughout the remainder of the 21st century.

Early on, the REC decided to explore larger real estate ventures that had the potential to generate substantial revenue. This was done by engaging with Hawai’i’s real estate development community to determine the viability of a development that would result in the creation of a revenue stream from either long-term ground lease rents, or annual income from the investment of land sale proceeds. Strong preference was to be given to a long-term ground lease solution (instead of a land sale), and also to a use consistent with the mission of the Church and its role in caring not just for its members but also for the community in which the Church exists. The REC believes that while any decision to proceed with development on portions of our Honolulu and Windward campuses must be revenue driven, it also should, to the extent possible, be a further expression of our Christian faith, the foundational elements of which are love of God and love of neighbor.

From late 2023 through early 2025, after numerous meetings with twelve developer entities and reviewing conceptual proposals by those that chose to submit them, the REC was able to test our requirements against what is feasible and sustainable in the evolving real estate market. We learned that much of the development community was not interested in the type of development projects desired by the Church for different reasons including the low profit potential for the developer, changing market conditions both as to use and rising interest rates and construction costs, and the desire of the developers to focus existing projects that were already underway.

In early 2025, after reevaluating its development and financial assumptions, the REC decided to shift its focus from a single large, multi-phase development intended to resolve all

the Church’s long term financial concerns, to smaller and medium size projects that are realistically achievable and still able to provide meaningful financial support for the Church. During the past year, the REC has been working on three projects:

The first was the expansion of the Toddler program for the Church’s Preschool by adding another Toddler class. With the support of the Preschool’s Director, Veronique Braithwaite, the additional Toddler class has been completed and additional toddlers are enrolled. This serves the dual purpose of meeting the community need for additional early childhood education and care at the toddler level while also providing the Church with additional revenue.

The second has been working with an experienced developer of affordable housing to explore the possibility of developing a moderately sized affordable rental housing project for seniors on our Honolulu campus. Representatives of the REC and the developer have engaged in meetings (in person and via Zoom), teleconferences, and have reviewed proposed conceptual renderings and initial financial assumptions regarding development and construction costs. We are in the very preliminary stages with the developer, and no commitments have been made but we are making progress.

The third has been exploring the expansion of childcare and early childhood education programs and facilities on our Windward campus given that such uses are consistent with CUC’s community outreach mission while also aligning with the express mission of the Samuel N. and Mary Castle Foundation Trust (which is the beneficiary of the restrictions in the land deed to our Windward campus). Discussions with the current provider of such childcare and early childhood education programs and services are ongoing but remain preliminary at this time.

The REC currently consists of David Yee, Martha Balkin, Paul Shinkawa, Dona Hanaike, John Field, Paul Hayes,Carolynn Bell-Tuttle, Brandon Lin, and Carl Schlack.

New 'Boomers & Beyond' Group is Booming!



The new Boomers & Beyond group, initiated by Ronny Lynn, had their first gathering on September 15 and has been meeting every week since. They eat lunch together and share in a fun activity to build connection. All seniors are invited! The group meets every Tuesday at 11:30 AM in the Women's Building.

BOOMERS & BEYOND OCT. 2026

TUESDAYS • 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM
Central Union Church - Women's Building

OCT 06	 COOKING DEMO w/ Rebecca Woodland <i>The Blonde Vegetarian: 236 Simple, Delicious, and Nutritious Vegetarian Recipes</i>
OCT 13	 CHAIR YOGA & TABLE GAMES
OCT 20	 ART OF Zentangle w/ Ronny Lynn \$2.50 for art supply kit
OCT 27	 HALLOWEEN PARTY BINGO & PRIZES Costumes encouraged!

Seniors invited to connect over lunch & activities!
Bring a sack lunch for yourself.

Women's League

Evy Hao & Jane Nagel, CUC Women's League

To make the Women's League (WL) a more vibrant part of our church, the Women's League Board voted to revise the Bylaws of 2015. The Women's League unanimously approved the 2026 Revised Bylaws at a special in-person and Zoom meeting on September 26, 2026. Major changes included:

1. **Two Vice-President positions** (instead of three)
2. **One Treasurer** (instead of two)
3. **One Secretary** (instead of two)
4. **Quorum for meetings** to be decided by the WL Board
5. **Change of management in:**
 - a. Women's Building
 - b. Greeters
 - c. Thrift Shop Manager
 - d. Regular programs for women of CUC



The current WL standing committees are major ministries of CUC. They are deemed essential and remain in the Bylaws: (1) Thrift Shop Operations Committee, (2) Scholarship Committee, (3) Flower Committee.

The Women's League will be sharing more information about activities and board positions. We hope you will consider sharing your talents with us.



Six Years of Serving Aloha

Our Serving Aloha food distribution marked its sixth anniversary serving 960 households in the first week of October 2026. Serving Aloha started as a short-term response to the pandemic, but each year an increasing number of people came in need of food, so did an increasing number of volunteers that came out to help. We thank all those—from the church and wider community—who share their time generously to make this vital ministry possible!

A PPParty on World Communion Sunday



At the start of October, we celebrated World Communion Sunday and the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi with pet blessings, paintings, and a potluck. Mahalo to our Welcome & Engagement Ministry who organized the event and set up the “CUC Cafe” with a mini gallery to accompany the delicious spread... we got to feast our stomachs and our eyes! CUC’s first ever art show highlighted over 25 works of art from six artists in the congregation. Mahalo to Scott Ballentyne, Ronny Lynn, Mark Norseth, Regina Shimomura, Rebecca Woodland, and Jean Yokoyama for sharing your art with us! Mahalo to all for coming to share in fellowship.



Converging 2026: Sing Through It!



Rev. Rushan Sinnaduray, *Senior Minister*

Thanks to your generous grace, I traveled to Louisville, Kentucky, for the Converging 2026 Conference to explore what vital, transforming worship from a Progressive “Just and Generous” perspective truly feels like. We gathered as musicians, pastors, and lay people to focus fiercely on the role that music and singing can play in spiritual formation and social transformation. We searched for the exact songs we need to help our communities “sing through” challenging times—lyrics that keep us grounded, strong, united, courageous, and resilient as we stand for Divine Justice, Love, Compassion, and Truth.

The sanctuary swelled with sound as we learned from brilliant, bold, and brave voices. We were guided by inspiring leaders like Bryan Sirchio, Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan, Christopher Grundy, Ken Medema and their vision for progressive worship, Cole Arthur Riley’s wondrous

integration of spiritual practice and poetry, and Jim Wallis’s tireless advocacy for peace. We were deeply moved by Rev. Otis Moss III, who powerfully preached a prophetic message of love and justice, and Rev. Dr. Cynthia Wilson, whose Grammy-nominated voice brought brilliant breath to the sacred music of Black church traditions. Together, they taught us that when we raise our voices, we raise our vision, and when we harmonize our hearts, we heal our hurts.

I want to extend my deepest, most heartfelt thanks to Central Union Church, for this opportunity to learn, grow, and become a better Pastor, preacher and worship leader. The conference was filled with the fervent singing of contemporary worship songs designed for a wounded, wonderful world, reminding us that when we sing together, we stand together and we grow together.

With deep gratitude and a joyful song,
Pastor Rushan

Learning Tree

Since its humble beginnings by the Rev. Claude DuTeil in 1978, The Institute for Human Services (IHS) has relentlessly expanded across the State, providing more than 87,000 nightly bed-units a year and 1,000 hot meals a day. Ken Harding, CUC’s Learning Tree coordinator, noted that the presentation by Connie Mitchell, Executive Director of IHS, perfectly captured this aspect of her agency’s dynamic but oft-unnoticed outreach.



Harding, who chairs the twice-a-month Learning Tree effort, asserted that Mitchell’s presentation underscored how our Church’s missional calling can significantly expand the impact of agencies like IHS, through enhanced volunteer support and community awareness. “Connie’s session beautifully embraced the collaborative nature of our Christ-centered calling,” he shared.



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS in Urban Honolulu

October 19, 2026
Mon. | 5:00-7:30 PM

Central Union Church Parish Hall
1660 S. Beretania St. Honolulu, HI 96826
Free parking available on campus!



Practical tips for **emergency readiness**



How to think about **resilience hubs** in your condos/neighborhoods



Strengthening **community connections**

Keiki welcome, activities provided!

Light dinner provided! Please **RSVP** by 10/16: bit.ly/ready1019





With support from Rep. Della Au-Bell, Chairperson of the Hawaii House Committee on Public Safety

October is Pastor Appreciation Month!

We give thanks for our pastors
and their ministry with us.

LOOKING AHEAD



Celebrate Honolulu Pride Month through music at Central Union Windward. "Sing of Colors" at Sunday worship at 10 AM in October!

October 13, 20, 27 (Tues); 15, 22, 29 (Thurs):
Bible Study: *Gospel According to Mark*

October 15: First meeting of new Church Council
5:30 PM @ Rewick Board Room

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

October 18: New Member Meeting
10 AM @ Rewick Board Room

October 19: Disaster Preparedness event
5-7:30 PM @ Parish Hall – RSVP: bit.ly/ready1019

October 20: Boomers & Beyond Art of Zentangle

October 27: Boomers & Beyond Halloween Party

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

Messiah rehearsals - Calling all singers!

Contact: Sarah-Young@centralunionchurch.org

Oct. 29, Nov. 5, 12, 19; Dec. 3, 10 from 6-8 PM

Dec. 12: Dress Rehearsal - 9 AM – 12 PM

Dec. 13: Pre-performance - 6:30 PM

Dec. 13: *Messiah* concert - 7:30 PM

November 18: Messy Church Advent Workshop
All ages welcome!

November 22: The Church Has Left the Building
9 AM joint worship service + service opportunities

November 29: First Sunday of Advent

~ We Remember our Saints ~

Eleanore "Elly" Chong died on October 9.
Please keep her family in prayer.

Support CUPS Fall Fitness!



Fall Fitness is a fun-filled morning dedicated to keiki-friendly activities such as kids sculpt, gymnastics, and soccer bootcamp.

It's the CUPS PTO's sole fundraiser for the school year. Funds raised are used to organize special events throughout the year. Donations also go towards additional classroom supplies, enhancing play spaces, the yearbook, planning Staff Appreciation Day, and other initiatives that benefit our CUPS keiki and teachers. 100% of contributions are tax-deductible. Make an online donation at: bit.ly/fallfitness2026

