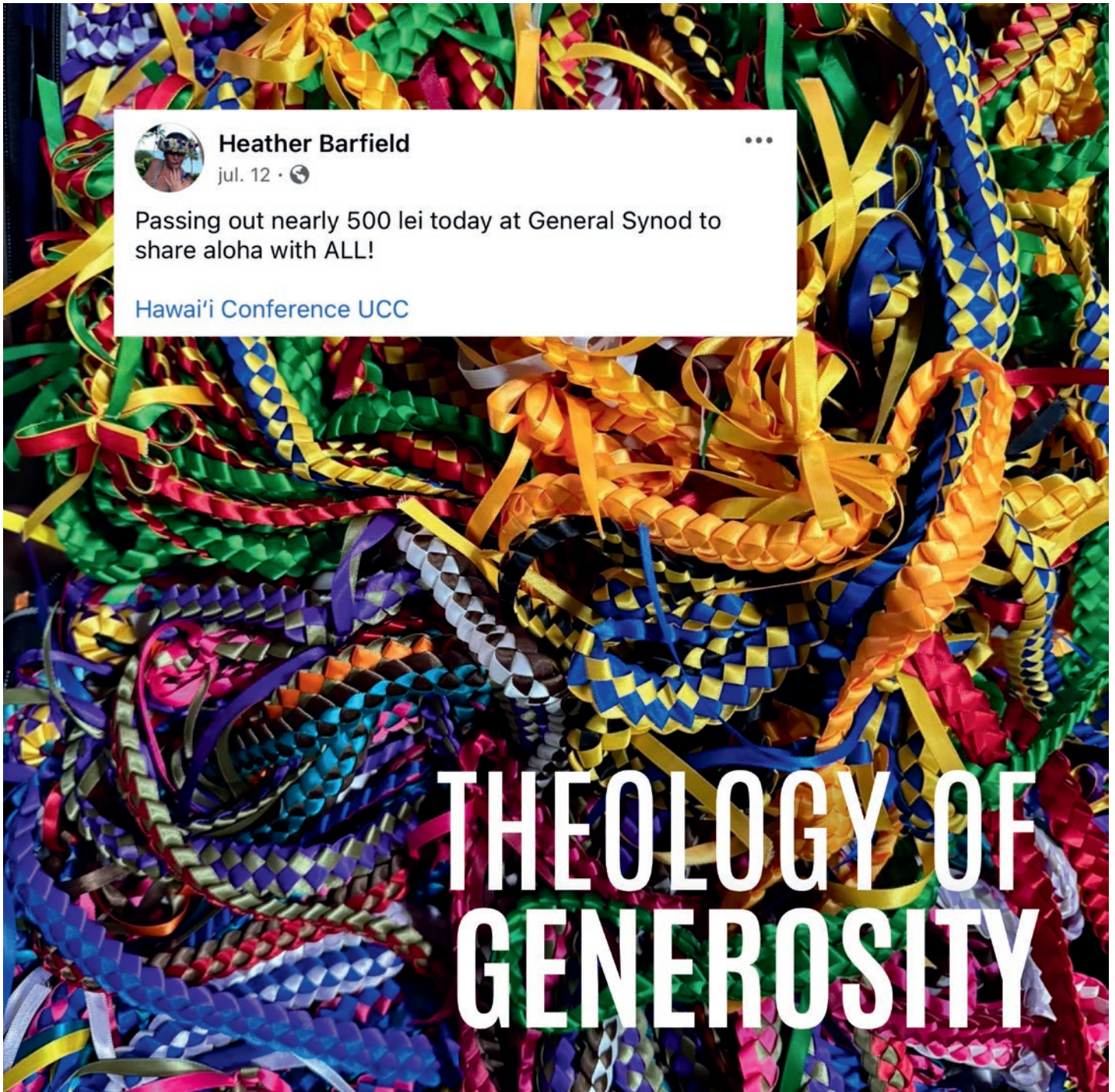


HAWAII CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

The Friend



The Oldest Newspaper West Of The Rocky Mountains | Founded 1843 | Volume 41, Issue 4 | September 2025



ONE 'OHANA

UNIFIED • RADIANT • TRANSFORMING

A Theology of Generosity

ALAN AKANA, KAHU, KŌLOA UNION CHURCH

Those who have had the opportunity to enjoy the spectacular activity of Kīlauea Volcano this year will likely share my sense of awe and wonder that naturally comes from being present during her breathtaking eruptions. On a clear January evening, my sister, a friend, and I spent a few hours enjoying the view of the magnificent lava lake inside Halema'uma'u Crater and brilliant fountains shooting hundreds of feet into the sky.

Since my family has lived on the slopes of Kīlauea for centuries, the place feels like my second home and, like my ancestors, I try my best to learn from her. It might sound strange to someone who is unfamiliar with life on the slopes of an active volcano, but I see each eruption of Kīlauea as an act of generosity. I say this with empathy for the people who have lost homes and businesses to the volcano, and in no way intend to minimize their loss. However, the people who have lived there for generations can appreciate Kīlauea's generosity, knowing that the eruptions have been experiences of both loss and growth, sorrow and joy, death and birth. When the lava was covering the black sand of Kaimū Beach in August of 1990, I was saddened that the beautiful and iconic beach where my father visited his great-grandparents was

disappearing right in front of my eyes. I also remember thinking that the volcano had created that beach in the first place—after all, black sand is lava that is churned by waves until broken into tiny pieces. I also appreciated that the volcano was creating something new that people would enjoy for centuries in the future.

When thinking about generosity, I often think of how generous the Earth is to all of her inhabitants. I cannot think of a place where this has been more evident for me than Kīlauea Volcano, where solid ground is being created—rich soil which will eventually become home to forests, gardens and communities. However, the Earth is generous virtually everywhere, if one only knows where to look. Our planetary home has always been this way. In the earliest stories of the Judeo-Christian faith traditions, God is portrayed as generous—the One who created the Earth to be generous as well.

Generosity is not always welcome however, at times requiring humility, discomfort, and sometimes even pain on behalf of the receiver. Yet, the motive of the generous giver always comes from a desire for the well-being of the recipient. This is true in the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2, which tell of a Creator of light and darkness, separation and gathering, permission and prohibition.

These are not always welcome attributes, but they all come from a generous God who created a generous home for us all to inhabit.

A healthy and vital theology of generosity requires a grounding in this understanding. It also requires a perspective that all people are created in the image of God, and therefore naturally generous as well. In fact, we are truly fulfilled when we are aware of and grateful for the generosity all around us—and then respond by acting with generosity in all of our relationships. Indeed, this is the only way to be fully at home in our bodies and on the Earth.

Rev. Dr. Alan Akana is the Kahu at Kōloa Union Church on Kaua'i. He enjoys painting watercolors of the indigenous flowers of Hawai'i, writing, and consulting with not-for-profit organizations in the areas of generosity and fundraising. His book, The Volcano Is Our Home: Nine Generations of a Hawaiian Family on Kīlauea Volcano, is available at Balboa Press and on Amazon.



God is still speaking

The Friend is published five times a year by:

**The Hawai'i Conference of
the United Church of Christ**

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Cover Photo Credit: Heather Barfield

The views expressed belong to the authors and do not necessarily represent the Hawai'i Conference.

Moving From Charity to Generosity

EJ RAVAGO, PASTOR, WAIALUA UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

When most people hear the word *generosity*, they immediately think of giving money, resources, or time. And while these are all good and necessary, generosity in the biblical sense runs much deeper. It is not simply the transfer of material goods from one person to another. True generosity is a posture of the heart, a self-giving that flows from love. It is not about *what* we give so much as *how* we give, and ultimately, *who* we give.

The greatest model of this is Jesus Christ. He didn't simply give from what he had; he gave *himself*. He stepped into our broken world, lived among us, and laid down his life so that we might live. This is generosity in its fullest form. While none of us can replicate the redemptive work of Christ, we are invited to learn from his example, to embody generosity not only with our wallets but with our whole selves. Generosity, as Jesus lived it, refuses to be confined to charity alone. Charity is good, yes, but generosity goes further. It costs something of you. You can give money to someone who is hungry, which is an act of kindness. But you can also sit with them, share a meal, listen to their story, and allow their humanity to touch yours. One asks only for your wallet, the other calls for your whole being.

This deeper kind of generosity is something I first learned not from a theology textbook or a seminary class but from watching my mom. As a child, I didn't always understand her. After Christmas, she would comb through the post-Christmas sales, filling her cart with gifts she planned to give away the following year. She would open our home to guests, cooking and feeding them until they felt like family. She always seemed to have something tangible to give, be

it clothes, food, or a small gift. But most of all, she gave herself – her time, her presence, her love. At the time, I thought it was a little too much, a lot of money spent, and time poured out. But now I see what I missed then. This was her way of living out gospel generosity.



Mydonna Ravago, EJ's mom
PHOTO CREDIT: EJ RAVAGO

In Filipino culture, generosity often takes the shape of hospitality. It is not just about offering food or a seat at the table, but about offering yourself so that others can experience care, warmth, and welcome. That is exactly what my mom did day-after-day. She showed me that generosity is more than giving.

This same spirit comes alive in Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). We often remember the Samaritan as "good" because he stopped to help a man beaten and left for dead on the road. But a closer look reveals an embodied generosity that goes beyond simply being "good." He saw the man and allowed his journey to be interrupted, noticing the pain in front of him when others chose to pass by. He

met his immediate needs, bandaging his wounds, pouring oil and wine to treat him, and placing him on his own animal, which meant the Samaritan now had to walk while the man rode. Jesus tells this story in response to a man asking, "Who is my neighbor?" The answer, through the Samaritan's example, is clear: *your neighbor is anyone in need whom God puts in your path*. Loving your neighbor means more than writing a check or offering a quick word of encouragement. It means stepping into the mess with them, even if it slows you down, even if it costs you something you cannot get back.

In the end, generosity is not measured in dollars but in sacrifice. It is the willingness to enter into another's need, to give more than is comfortable, to offer not just our possessions but our presence. When we live this way, our generosity reflects the heart of Christ, who gave Himself without holding anything back. And when I think about that, I go back to my mom. As her son, I may not have understood everything she did at the time, but now I see that her life was a living sermon on generosity. She taught me that true generosity is not about how much you give away, but how much of *yourself* you are willing to pour out for the sake of love. That is what the Samaritan modeled, what Christ embodied, and what we are all invited to practice.

Give your resources, give your time, and above all, give yourself generously, following the example of Christ's love. In these challenging times, what might it look like if the Church fully entered this mess, offering her whole self to a hurting world?





Echoes of Eden: The Sacred Protest of Generosity

DAVID K. POPHAM, CONFERENCE MINISTER

Generosity is the opening theme of the Bible. The second creation story (Genesis 2) is an adept exploration of union, intimacy, and disruption against the background of God's generous giving of life in all its diversity. In this story Adam is created first. Then the garden as a home. Then come animal companions and at last Eve is provided as a human companion. The narrative is built around God's generosity of life to life for life.

In this story generosity has the goal of intimacy in communion. Adam and Eve are seen and known by God through walks in the cool of the evening. God is seen and known by Adam and Eve through an interdependent friendship. There is a reciprocity between God's blessings of life and life's joy in the Creator: a receiving freely and a giving freely unencumbered by caveats and qualifiers.

We know this story and are aware that intimate communion is ruptured by shame. Knowing one another is replaced by hiding from one another and where reciprocity of communion once prevailed, frustration now marks toil under the sun. Dread follows the original family and soon brother will turn against brother. By the fourth chapter of Genesis, Eden is but a hollow echo. From this perspective Adam and Eve are a warning of what happens when generosity is disrupted, and caveats and qualifiers reduce receiving and giving freely to receiving and

giving begrudgingly and only if earned.

The rupture of Eden echoes down to our present day. We need only turn on the evening news for the parade of shame and hiding in which we participate. Economic deceit over our federal job reports. Political manipulations through our gerrymandering efforts. Social alienation as we seek after oligarchy and tyranny. None of this speaks from a connection to God's generosity of life to life for life.

Rather these attitudes speak to the erosion of intimate communion and the possibility of genuine connections. Hoarding is rewarded over sharing, and the individual is elevated at the expense of the community. These all too familiar dynamics speak from a dystopian world where grasping is considered a virtue. Ebenezer Scrooge goes by any number of names now days, yet his description as "a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone ... a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous, old sinner" remains. For in his mindset, we see economic manipulation, relational deceit, and social alienation.

In a world shaped by covetousness and grasping, the Genesis vision of God's generosity of life to life for life is a form of resistance and even protest to modern forms of manipulation, deceit, and alienation from each other and from God as the source of life. Where the closed hands of Scrooge and his ilk live in fear behind

compound walls and security services, generous open hands freely receive the world as a gift and contribute to the world as giver. This protest of generosity is for intimacy and union based on mutual support between us and others and between us and God.

Generosity, as is developed in the Genesis narrative, was born out of a time of struggles for connection and identity as the ancient Israelites were forcefully relocated to foreign lands and faced similar dynamics as political and religious manipulation, economic uncertainties, and identity politics. In diaspora God's people sought through crisis and tribulation to honor God's generosity of life to life for life. Today such spiritual protest continues to rebuke Scrooge and his attitudes while seeking to embrace intimate communion with God and with all creation.

Though we dwell east of Eden, by living as Christ's generous followers, we resist the forces of covetousness and fear and participate in God's sacred protest of generosity of life to life for life. In every act of kindness, in every choice for compassion, and every relationship which prioritizes intimate communion, Eden echoes once more.



BEYOND THE OFFERING PLATE:

Other Ways to Donate to Your Local Church

ANDREW BUNN, HCF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Churches rely on the faithful gifts of their members -- not only time and service, but also financial and asset contributions that underwrite ministry, operations, and property. Giving during worship helps, but there are many other ways to support your local church beyond the offering plate if you have the means to do so.

Recurring & Online Gifts. Set up regular electronic giving through your church's online portal, text-to-give number, ACH bank transfer, or credit card. Monthly gifts smooth cash flow, reduce administrative burden, and are easier for donors to sustain than occasional large donations.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHUTTERSTOCK

Employer & Workplace Giving.

Ask your employer about payroll deduction programs and matching gifts. Payroll giving automates regular support, while employer matches can meaningfully increase your gift.

Gifts of Securities & Appreciated Assets. Donating publicly traded stocks, mutual funds, or bonds that have appreciated often yields better tax results than selling first and gifting the proceeds. Transferring securities directly to the church typically avoids capital gains tax and may allow a charitable deduction for the fair market value.

IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs). If you have an IRA and are eligible by age, you can make a direct transfer from your IRA to a qualified charity that excludes the distribution from taxable income without itemizing deductions. QCDs are especially useful for donors who take the standard deduction or who want to reduce taxable income while supporting the church. Confirm rules and limits with your IRA custodian and tax advisor.

Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs).

A DAF is a giving account held by a sponsoring organization. You fund the DAF (often receiving an immediate tax deduction), then recommend grants to charities over time. DAFs are useful for "bunching" charitable deductions in high-income years, making anonymous grants, and gifting complex assets that are hard to give directly.

Planned Gifts: Bequests, Trusts & Annuities. Planned giving lets you make significant commitments now or at death. Bequests in a will or trust can specify a dollar amount, percentage, or the remainder of your estate for the church. Charitable gift annuities (CGAs) provide fixed lifetime payments to the donor with the remainder to the church. Charitable remainder trusts (CRTs) pay income now while preserving a future charitable remainder. These vehicles are powerful but require legal and tax counsel and coordination with the church.

Endowments & Named Funds.

Consider creating or contributing to a named endowment or memorial fund. Endowments preserve principal and use only investment earnings to support programs perpetually — ideal

for sustaining worship, missions, scholarships, or building maintenance.

Discuss minimum donations, spending policy, and naming with church leadership. The Hawai'i Conference Foundation manages many endowment and restricted funds for the benefit of the Conference and its member churches.

Real Property, Vehicles & In-Kind Gifts.

Some churches accept real estate, vehicles, or equipment that meet practical needs. Gifts of property may require appraisal, title transfer, and board approval. When they are accepted, they can be sold or used by the congregation. Before donating, check the church's acceptance policy.

Life Insurance & Beneficiary Designations. Naming the church as beneficiary of a life insurance policy or retirement account (or transferring ownership of a paid-up policy) lets you leave a legacy without reducing current cash flow. Update beneficiary forms and notify the church so they can properly acknowledge your intention.

You might consider combining methods above for best effect. Before making a gift, ask your church about gift-acceptance policies, required documentation, and other critical information needed to accept the gift, and consult your financial planner, tax advisor or attorney for tax treatment and estate planning implications. Giving beyond the plate can increase your impact and build enduring resources for your church, and your church will thank you.



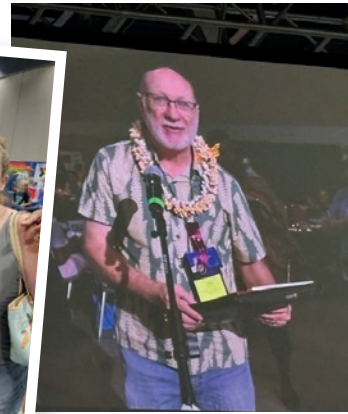
"My recent experience as a delegate to General Synod 35: Into the Deep was a first for me! I enjoyed the fellowship and welcomed the opportunity to build relationships with our Hawai'i delegates and conference staff. As a first-time attendee, I was somewhat awestruck to be 'in' fellowship with hundreds of other delegates from across the country. I experienced the UCC's diversity in race, language, age, delegates from small churches, large churches, country churches, city churches, Open and Affirming churches, conservative churches etc. I witnessed diversity in ideas and comments shared during my assigned committee meetings and during 'Speak Out' sessions. All people, thoughts and ideas were welcomed." **Marilyn Hasegawa**



Chris Czarnecki and Cheri Dennis



Danielle White, Doug Wooten, Heather Barfield



David Popham speaks on the floor of General Synod



PAAM Dinner attendees with honoree Norma DeSaegher

"Our Sunday worship was led by our General Minister and President Karen Goergia Thompson whose message was in her State of the Church address and powerful Sunday sermon. Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President, invited us to reflect honestly on who we are and who we are becoming as the United Church of Christ. She offered both lament and hope—acknowledging the weight of shrinking numbers and financial challenges, while calling us to courageous imagination, faithful innovation, and bold engagement with our communities. She reminded us that we are not simply managing decline but discerning how to be church anew in such a time as this. Her message titled 'Beyond Dry Bones: Into the Deep' included words of wisdom for the future of the church, providing a sense of hope in these uncertain times.

"A highlight for me was passing out nearly 500 lei that a handful of individuals made and donated to share our aloha with other delegates. They were a hit! We even had a few people want to learn about the significance of lei. Seeing people smile when they received and wore them throughout the week was a joy for our delegates as well." **Heather Barfield**

"The Hawai'i delegation to General Synod 35 shared the aloha spirit with as many delegates as we could reach with the ribbon leis of aloha made by Kahu Heather Barfield. As our delegates moved across the floor regaling people with colorful ribbon leis, the smiles and expressions of thanks from fellow delegates was truly heartwarming. There was a feeling of pride amongst us seeing many people wearing their leis every day of the convention. Who knew that a ribbon lei of aloha would bring such joy to people." **Roberta Jahrling**



Karen Georgia Thompson delivers sermon at community worship service



Roberta Jahrling and Taha'a Kahele



Eric Anderson and some fellow UCC Media Justice Ministry Board members

"I would like to share how grateful I am to the associations for the individuals they nominated to serve as delegates of the Hawai'i Conference at General Synod 35. The time we spent together in Kansas City was unforgettable and showed just what HCUCC 'Ohana is all about. The delegation was made up of the most spirit-filled, good-humored, rock solid, helpfully humble and well-spoken group of believers. Thanks be to God for each one of them and mahalo again to our churches, associations and conference for your thoughtful and prayerful selection of delegates." **Danielle White**

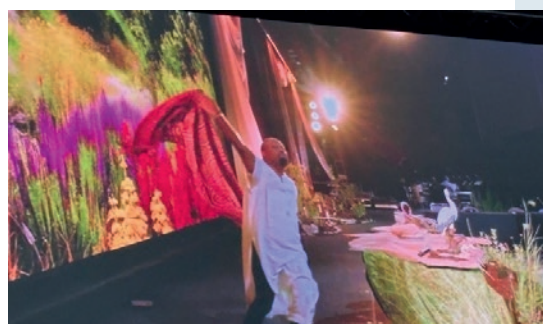


PAAM booth with Dick Hom and Mitchell Young

"We talked a lot, listened a lot, sat too long, and ate too much. Yet, at the end of the day, many of our delegation met in the hotel bar to talk story – some of the younger ones until early morning hours. We talked church and politics, theology and faith. We shared stories from our families and our churches, laughed together and worried together about our country and 'solved all of the problems of the world if folks would only listen to us! These evenings truly were food for the soul. The delegation returned to Hawai'i with a renewed sense of hope for the larger church and each of our individual churches. May we all learn how to swim in deep waters!" **Cheri Dennis**



Lori Yamashiro gives a lei to Tara Barber



Community worship service



Jonathan Roach and Papa Makua Wendell Davis



Hawai'i delegation and staff at breakfast



Robb and Jann Kojima and Andy Bunn



Frank Mulec passing out lei on the Synod floor

Read their entire reflections on our website at <https://www.hcucc.org/news>

General Synod 35 Ends Biennial Era

It is very difficult to adequately convey the complete experience of attending a General Synod—the sights, sounds, emotions, mountain-top moments that move one deeply at one's very core. Synod is a bit like a family reunion mixed with a business convention, complete with vendors and swag; a kind of summer camp for adults where one can meet new friends, be away from home, learn new skills, and be exposed to new ideas and foods; a musical event, complete with “rock stars” whom you've only seen on screens but admire from afar. Yes, Synod is all of these things, and much more!

Here are some highlights from General Synod 35 in Kansas City, Missouri:

- By an overwhelming vote of affirmation, the General Synod elected Shari Prestemon as our Associate General Minister and Co-Executive of Global Ministries, Love of Neighbor Ministries.
- The Council of Conference Ministers presented a word of blessing from each Conference Minister; David Popham's word was “nu'u, meaning “community” from our Samoan sisters and brothers.
- UCC General Minister and President Karen Georgia Thompson delivered an insightful State of the Church address, “A Tent of Our Own Making”.
- There were 12 resolutions to come out of committees and the vast majority were adopted by the General Synod body overwhelmingly, including the



one submitted by the Council on Racial and Ethnic Ministries (COREM), “Calling the United Church of Christ to Oppose the 2025 Immigration Rollbacks and Support Immigrants, Refugees, and Pacific Island Communities, while Amplifying Antiracist Work on Behalf of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in Response to the Current Socio-Political Backlash.”

- One prudential resolution that generated much discussion came out of Committee #3: The Small Town and Rural Coalition of the United Church of Christ Requests to Be Recognized as a Self-Created Group. This resolution required a simple majority to pass and was eventually adopted by a vote of Approve 372, Deny 244, Abstain 55.
- In a separate voting session, delegates overwhelmingly approved the formation of a new conference, the Keystone Conference, to be made up of the four current Pennsylvania Conferences.
- Voting delegates rejected a proposed revision to the UCC Constitution and Bylaws which would have changed the Associate General Minister (AGM) positions from being elected by Synod to being

appointed by the General Minister and President. AGMs no longer would be Officers of the UCC, nor would they be UCC Board Members. Voters expressed fear that power could be misused and there would be fewer checks and balances in the denomination.

- Tony Coleman, senior pastor of First Congregational Church Memphis, Tennessee, preached a thought-provoking, inspiring sermon to close out this General Synod, earning him a standing ovation at its conclusion.

Find all the resolutions from General Synod here: <https://generalsynod.org/resolutions>.

Watch video recordings of General Synod highlights and events here: <https://www.ucc.org/gs-livestream/>.

Our conference should be very proud of our delegates; they worked diligently, thoughtfully, and collaboratively in their respective committees preparing their respective resolutions for presentation to the General Synod body. They were a cohesive group, supporting one another, looking out for each other, and sharing their concerns, frustrations, and moments when they saw God.

General Synod 36 will be held in **2028** in Cleveland, Ohio. Hope to see you there!

Youthful Delegates Brought Joy, Dedication, and Wisdom to General Synod

Our young adult delegates represented the Hawai'i Conference admirably at General Synod 35:

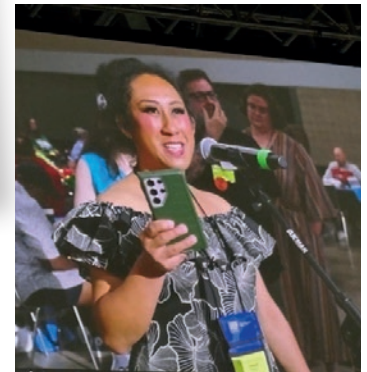
YZ [pronounced "wise"] literature is wisdom from the young, Generations Y and Z to be more specific. See how young people are shining, witnessing, and reflecting light.



Andy Bunn, Jack and Caroline Belsom, Taha'a Kahele, Nate Timoteo



Danielle White and Nate Timoteo



Josann Jenks addresses the Synod



Group dinner at BRGR Kitchen + Bar



Taha'a Kahele dressed for serious business



Taha'a Kahele speaking on the floor of Synod



Nate Timoteo, Preston Iha, Taha'a Kahele

To learn more and see more from youth and young adults, or to submit content for consideration for future pages in *The Friend*, visit our webpage at hcucc.org/yz-literature.



Taha'a Kahele, Josann Jenks, Marilyn Hasegawa

News from our Associations and Affiliates

Associations to Hold Fall Gatherings

- Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches (AHEC): October 23 ('Aha O Nā Kahu); October 24 – 25 ('Aha Hālāwai); Ewa Community Church
- Hawai'i Island Association (HIA): November 1; Hilo Coast UCC
- Kaua'i Association: November 16; Līhu'e United Church

Anti-Racism Training

Raymond Aldred, Director of the Indigenous Studies Program at the Vancouver School of Theology, will present a two-day advanced anti-racism training on Saturdays, November 15 and November 22, 2025. This training is a follow-up to the initial anti-racism training presented in 2024 and is designed to focus on our unique cultural context. Registration information will be coming out soon.

Upcoming Boundary Trainings

The Hawai'i Island and O'ahu Associations will host a two-day robust boundary training, "A Position of Trust," on two Tuesdays in October, October 7 and 14, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., via Zoom. Tracey Dawson of Sacred Space Ministry will be the presenter for this training. Registration information will be coming out soon.

'Aha O Nā Mokupuni O Maui, Moloka'i, A Me Lāna'i will also host a boundary training, "Healthy Ministry Relationships," on Saturday, October 25, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Please check with your respective associations' Committees on Ministry to ensure that these trainings meet their boundary training requirements.

Innovation & Engagement Ministry Labs

The Innovation & Engagement Missional Team has been busy planning more Ministry Labs in 2025! More information will be coming soon, but please put the following dates in your calendar:

- Tuesday, September 30, 6:30 p.m. Amy Butler, pastor of Community Church of Honolulu, will be talking about her newest book, *Holy Disruption: A Manifesto for the Future of Faith Communities*.
- Tuesday, October 21, 6:30 p.m. Pure Imagination
- Tuesday, November 4, 6:30 p.m. Demographics and Other Daring Faith Conversations
- Tuesday, December 16, 6:30 p.m. Changing Models of Search & Call, Jonathan Roach

Conference News and Highlights

Go to www.hcucc.org to learn more about these and many more stories from around the Conference.

Pastoral Transitions



Olaf Hoeckmann-Percival celebrated his 20th year as Pastor of Waimea United Church of Christ on Sunday, July 6. His first Sunday at Waimea UCC was on July 3, 2005.

Timothy Morton has been called to serve as the bridge pastor with Wahiawa United Church of Christ. His first Sunday was August 3.



Mark Poppen has been called by Wai'oli Huiia Church to be their bridge pastor. His first Sunday was August 3.



Inok Lautej has concluded his ministry with Waimea Marshallese Ministry on Kaua'i. His last Sunday was August 24.



Verl Klassen was installed as pastor with dual standing of Waihe'e



David Kaupu was recognized for his 65th anniversary of his ordination at Kaumakapili Church on August 31. He was ordained on December 18, 1960, and served as the Kahu of Kaumakapili Church from 1995 – 2003.

Protestant Church by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches (AHEC) on August 30.



Staff Transition



Vivian Maunakea retired after 36 years of faithful service in the Conference Office. Her last day in the office was

August 29. She has been a cornerstone of the office staff after starting in accounting and working her way to being our receptionist and our Ambassador of Aloha. She always brought her sunny smile, joy, and sense of humor to all that she did, and she will be greatly missed!



In Memory

Julia Matsui Estrella, 84, passed away on June 18, 2025, at her home in Kapolei. A tireless advocate for justice and

fairness for all, she was one of the founding mothers of Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM) in the United Church of Christ. She was also the director of the Pacific and Asian American Center for Theology and Strategies (PACTS). She was a staunch advocate for Hawaiian sovereignty.

She is survived by her son Robert and predeceased by her loving husband, Roger.

Steven T. Ito, 80, passed away on July 21 from complications following emergency surgery.

He served in a variety of commissioned and interim ministry roles within the Hawai'i Conference and in the national setting of the United Church of Christ. He was commissioned to serve on behalf of the Hawai'i Conference as a campus minister at the University of Hawai'i, Mānoa, and was the acting Hunger Action Office Director and Justice & Peace Ministry Coordinator for the national setting of the UCC. He also



Conference Calendar of Events

OCTOBER 23

AHEC 'Aha O Nā Kahu, Ewa Community Church

OCTOBER 24 - 25

AHEC Fall Hālāwai, Ewa Community Church

OCTOBER 25

State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches

NOVEMBER 1

HIA 'Aha Mokupuni, Hilo Coast UCC

NOVEMBER 8

HCF BOD/Conference Council Meeting

NOVEMBER 16

Kaua'i Association 'Aha Mokupuni, Lihue United Church

Thanks to our friends, *The Friend* is free of charge to anyone who requests it. We offer our sincere mahalo to those who have generously given a monetary gift to help defray publication costs.

A gift of \$15 will pay for one person's subscription for one year.

Gifts may be sent to the Hawai'i Conference UCC, 700 Bishop Street, Suite 825, Honolulu, HI, 96813.

served for one year in Cleveland during a transition period when the UCC underwent restructuring.

Among other things, Steve will be remembered for his dry wit, his passion for youth and campus ministries, and his love for his family. He was a tireless advocate for social justice and for the marginalized.

Steve is survived by his wife, Ann; daughters Vanessa (Ryker Wada) and Vania (Ian Matsumoto); and five grandchildren. He was predeceased by his eldest daughter, Vesper, in 1987.

September 2025

GENEROSITY IN THE COMMUNITY

Making a Splash in the Community

JENNILLE WHITE, MODERATOR, HILO COAST UCC

Throughout the year, Hilo Coast UCC hosts several events for the children in the community with themes such as caring for ourselves, loving one another, and appreciating the planet that God has created for us to thrive on. This summer, a new event made a SPLASH with some good ol' FUN!

On July 25, 2025, our Spiritual Enrichment and Women's Fellowship teams hosted a Keiki Summer Splash event for the community. This fun-filled day had over 40 kids and their families enjoying a giant waterslide and bouncing castle on our church grounds

in Honomū. We also had the amazing addition of the Pepe'ekeo Volunteer Fire Station who brought their fire engine and sprayed the slides with the water hoses!

As part of the event, a delicious taco lunch bar and an ice cream sundae bar were provided for everyone to enjoy. Kids were also gifted books donated by church members and the community. Needless to say, by the time the event ended we were all well-fed, well-read, and exhausted (in a great way!).

The hard work and dedication of our congregation has allowed us to host these events routinely, but it is the community that fuels the funding. Hilo Coast UCC runs a weekly Thrift Store, managed by our Women's Fellowship Team. This Thrift Store carries out a long-lived mission of our church to provide



PHOTO CREDIT: CARA ANN MAEDA

affordable items to the community, help those who are ready to donate items, and reduce the amount of waste that ends up in our overflowing landfills. Through the purchases made by the community, we are able to offer these types of events and give back to the same community. It is an honor to participate in the cycle of generosity, and we praise God for the good vibes that come with it!

To see the smiles, hear the laughter, and be a part of the many connections made through this event was inspiring. We are grateful to share the love of God with our community and this leaves us anticipating how we can keep making a splash in our community.



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