

Community Partnerships Revive Historic Maui Churches

Two small church buildings on Maui, both without active congregations and in danger of falling, have experienced a resurrection of sorts thanks to the power of community partnerships.

Hualoha Congregational Church

Located on a windblown point overlooking Haleki'i Bay near Kaupo on the Pi'ilani Highway, Hualoha Church is regularly battered by heavy rain and sea air since its founding in 1859. Until recently, the dilapidated sanctuary was unsafe to use with its rotten floorboards, salt-eaten door hinges, punctured roof, and corroded steeple on the brink of collapse.



The Hawai'i Conference Foundation (HCF), which owns the property, turned to the Hualoha Preservation 'Ahahui, a non-profit organization that is comprised of members of the nearby community, which took a special interest in the project and donated time and money for rebuilding.

People from all walks of life, both church goers and non-church goers, volunteered to help restore the church. Nearly \$80,000 in grants and donations poured in from more than thirty foundations.

(continued on page 5)

Partnering Is Focus of 194th 'Aha

“Called as Partners” is the theme for the 194th 'Aha Pae'aina to be held June 8 -11 at Central Union Church on O'ahu.

Alluding to the anticipated partnership between the Hawai'i Conference and the South Seoul Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), the theme will be evident in the keynote addresses, workshops, worship and fellowship.

The 'Aha Pae'aina opens June 8-9 with the 'Aha Iki—annual meetings of the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches, State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches, State Sunday School



Min Heui Cheon (left), PROK ecumenical officer, who visited Hawai'i last February 2015, will be one of two keynote speakers.

Association, and Christian Endeavor—followed by the 'Aha Makua on June 10 and 11.



Karen Georgia Thompson, UCC ecumenical officer, will speak on Saturday morning.

Min Heui Cheon, PROK Executive Secretary for Partnership and Ecumenical Relations, will deliver Friday's keynote address. On Saturday, her UCC counterpart, Karen Georgia Thompson, Minister for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, will bring the keynote to 'Aha delegates and visitors. The original idea for the Conference's partnership with the South Seoul Presbytery came from these ecumenical officers of the two denominations.

A variety of workshops building upon and related to the theme of partnership will be offered during the 'Aha Makua. Attendees will explore ways that churches can do ministry through partnerships both locally and beyond.

The Conference-Presbytery partnership will be finalized and celebrated at the 'Aha Pae'aina. It is an opportunity for churches from Korea and Hawai'i to collaborate in prophetic witness and to live out more fully Jesus' prayer “that all may be one” (John 17:21).

More information about the 'Aha Pae'aina, including events and registration forms, will be mailed to churches in March.

What's Inside

- 2 Getting Out, Getting Real, by Charles C. Buck
- 3 Churches Connect Via Web and Social Media
- 4 Faces Around the Conference
- 5 One Great Hour of Sharing Promises Better Future
- 6 UCC News
- 7 Missionary Visits Hawai'i
Highlights from the Website
National Youth Event Registration Opens
- 8 Conference Calendar
Don't Forget Important Information

Getting Out, Getting Real

by Charles C. Buck, Conference Minister

In the brief time my kids were home from college for winter break, they spent most of it going out—literally getting outdoors, desperate to regain color in their skin. Short days, cold weather and long hours in the library made them more pale than they liked. And I admit that by the time they left, they looked healthier and they seemed happier.



Church people like us need to get out, too, for our own spiritual health. Too much focus on ourselves and over-absorption in our own needs can warp our perspective of ourselves, of our mission, and even of God.

Getting out was both the practice and message of Jesus. He went out from his hometown (Luke 4: 16-30), sent out his followers (Luke 9 and 10), and commissioned his disciples to go out and be witnesses of the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20). I often remind people that the mission of the church is not to bring people in and keep them there, but to equip and send them out. Real church growth is better measured not by our numbers of members but by our impact on others around the world.

Getting out, however, is more than just about spiritual health. It's how we discover our very purpose and meaning. Both the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20) and the Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22: 34-40) are essentially calls to get outside of ourselves and to be in mutual and loving relationship with God and others. We were not meant to live apart and isolated, but to live in community and to have concern for one another.

Getting out is getting real. Our friends in South Africa teach us about *ubuntu*, or, "I am what I am because of who we all are." Desmond Tutu said *ubuntu* is the essence of being human: "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours. We belong in a bundle of life. We say, a person is a person through other persons" (*No Future without Forgiveness*, 1999).

So it is in relationship with others that we become most authentically the people God created us to be.

Among the ways we live this getting out is through partnership, that is, by forming relationship with another church or community. In the Hawai'i Conference, we partner with Global Ministries in support of missionaries like Martha Mensendiek in Japan and Kristine Tisinger in Ghana. We also are partners in the Pacific with the Micronesian Council United Church of Christ, which includes the churches of the Marshall Islands, Kosrae, Pohnpei and Chuuk. There are also many informal partnerships that we have cultivated, as well as the partnerships of our local churches.

A new partnership is being created with the South Seoul Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. This coming June, guests from the Presbytery will join us at our 'Aha Pae'aina to help us formalize our mutual partnership (see the article on page 1 of this *Friend*). In anticipation of this, local churches that are interested in potential partnerships with a local church in South Seoul will be invited to host two to three Korean visitors during the days they will be here in June. Hosting means guiding them at the 'Aha (sitting with them at meals, explaining what is happening, and introducing them to others), inviting them to your Sunday service, and perhaps offering a tour of O'ahu. This would be a great way to begin conversation about a church-to-church partnership.

Church people like us need to get out, too, for our own spiritual health.

More information is forthcoming, but if already you are intrigued or eager to know more, give me a call or send an email.

Partnerships, both those that exist and those yet to be formed, are opportunities to be reminded that following Christ means getting up from the pews and going out beyond our church walls. Whatever resistance there is in getting partnerships started or keeping them going can be overcome if we remember the benefits, among them:

- We expand our minds and hearts as we meet new people, learn new cultures and encounter new ideas and thoughts.
- We become more inspired in faith and action as we see partners facing similar issues but also dealing with challenges unlike, even greater, than our own.
- We discover Christ in a more real and visible way not only in the face of our partner, but in the witness and work of our mutual ministry.

There is much to be gained—for ourselves, for others and for God's mission—when we get out and get into partnering.



God is still speaking

The Friend is published six times a year by the Hawai'i Conference of the United Church of Christ, 1848 Nu'uuanu Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96817.

Phone: (808) 537-9516 or (800) 734-7610 (Neighbor Island Toll Free)

Fax: (808) 521-7196

E-mail: leehenrychang@hcucc.org Lee Henry-Chang

Contributing Writers: Scott Davis, Kuulei Funn

Churches Connect Via Web and Social Media

In the United States, more than 44 million churchgoers visit the website of their place of worship, and more than 17 million non-churchgoers visit a local church's website over the course of twelve months, according to Grey Matter Research and Consulting.

Going online has largely replaced the Yellow Pages and newspaper advertising to become the primary way that churches connect with people. Many find church websites useful for watching sermons, getting information, or learning about their faith.

Others also find it a convenient way to give. In a poll conducted by Dunham and Company, 59% of donors over the age of 65, and 60% of donors under the age of 65, gave online. (See the August 2015 issue of *The Friend* for more on this and ideas on how to receive on-line gifts.)

While many churches in Hawai'i are already online, others are not, and those that are may be wondering if there are other more effective or less costly ways of doing so. With more options now available, deciding what's best comes down to a few questions:

- How much time must be invested to maintain my web presence?
- How much will it cost and what is my budget?
- What are my church's communication needs or goals?

Websites

The usual way churches create an on-line presence is through a website. There are two ways to build a website: do it yourself or hire someone.

But before deciding, consider time and budget. Doing it yourself or having someone in-house or on-staff create a



website will cost less but take much more time. The easiest and most user-friendly way is to go to sites that operate like a blog. You type what you

want, and the site does all the formatting for you. Examples of these are Wordpress (wordpress.com) or Tumblr (tumblr.com).

However, this type of site becomes difficult to navigate as information adds up over a single, long page. By investing a little more time, you can create a site from templates, even from scratch, using web hosting services. Some popular choices include wix.com, godaddy.com, and networksolutions.com, which charge anywhere from zero (with ads and no bells and whistles) to low-cost, full-featured solutions. Type in "web hosting" in a search browser to find user reviews, or ask other churches for recommendations.

If time is short and budget is less an issue, you may want to outsource. There are numerous sites dedicated to helping churches build their own web pages. For example, e-zekiel.com offers website design and monthly hosting starting at \$19 for 25 pages and two gigabytes of storage (plenty for most churches). Another, mychurchwebsite.com, offers custom design, unlimited pages, and a mobile site (for smartphones) starting at \$49 per month.

Whether you do it yourself or hire someone, make sure your website has critical information like name and location, contacts, worship and office hours, and description of programs or ministries.

For more information and tips, as well as a list of providers offering UCC churches a special discount on web design and hosting services, visit ucc.org/webtips.

Social Media

Because websites take time and money, some churches have turned to social media to reach out to others. Two of the most popular are Facebook and Google+, although many others will do the job just as well.



Facebook

All the most vital information about a church can be posted on a Facebook page, and navigation is easy. Tutorials can guide your setup, and a page can be set up in less than an hour.

Because it is a social network, users can post their own messages and photos and make comments on other posts. While this is a great way to create dialogue, it can become troublesome if not monitored daily. Check out the Facebook page of Filipino United Church of Christ in Waipahu, O'ahu, which regularly posts photos and comments from users.

Google+

Like Facebook, information appears on a single page, and setup is easy. Because it's part of Google, visitors will be able to find your church's location seamlessly with Google Maps. Also, users can post reviews and comments about your church on the page. Waiola Church on Maui uses Google+ and has over 125,000 views.

Know Your Audience

The best online solution for your church may take some brainstorming. Consider what message you want to convey and who you are trying to reach. Whether it's a website, social media, or a combination of both, it's always best to start off simple and let your audience mold your page by the feedback and comments you receive.

2015 Year in Review

Throughout the year, photos of the Church Leaders Event, Clergy Retreat, Association 'Aha Mokupuni, 'Aha Pae'aina, and Fall Youth Camp were shared in *The Friend*. Many other events took place in 2015. Photos from some of these are shared here.



Clockwise from left: Kaua'i clergy at the service of installation for Barry Mick at Kapa'a First Hawaiian Church; Stephen Boyd, UCC Minister for Chaplains and Specialized Ministries, leading a workshop at the Conference Office; O'ahu Association Members in Discernment; Hawai'i Island Association licensing Diane Hultman at Pu'ula UCC; Church Administrators workshop; Tri-Isle Clergy at Richard Miller's recognition service of licensing; Wendi Gordon installed at Ka Hana O Ke Akua Church in Waianae; Mahina and Melveen Kaupiko, licensed ministers of Hau'oli Kamana'o Church in Miloli'i on Hawai'i Island.

(Maui Churches, continued from page 1)

“In Hualoha you have people worth a hundred million dollars walking alongside people who are on the verge of welfare, and they’re working together,” said Sherman Hee, HCF Executive Director. “The diversity of the people notwithstanding, the United Church of Christ provided the common ground for the common good.”

Among those who volunteered was Stephan Lefebvre, who visited East Maui in 2013. When he learned about Hualoha, the Montreal native abandoned his vacation to assist in a restoration effort coordinated by longtime Hana resident Carl Lindquist.

Before repairs could begin, Carl disappeared in a Thanksgiving Day flash flood, swept out to sea along with Rae, his wife of fifty-two years. To honor Carl, Stephan adopted the restoration project and assembled a crew of more than fifty volunteers from across Maui.

“It was just unreal,” said Carl “Soot” Bredhoff, President of Hualoha Preservation ‘Ahahui. “I think Akua was with us the whole time. There’s something about Hualoha. It’s like God grabs you when you’re there, and it brings people to love that place.”

On August 20, a service of rededication for the restored sanctuary was attended by two hundred people—many more than the church has seen in years. Since then, the church has been a venue for weddings and funerals and has become a living asset to the community.

Palapala Ho’omau Congregational Church

Built in 1857 by Christian missionaries, Palapala Ho’omau is listed on the Hawai’i State Register of Historic Places. The church is famous for its stained glass window portraying Jesus as a Hawaiian monarch, and the site is best known for one of its cemetery residents: famed aviator Charles Lindbergh.



For years, both the church and Lindbergh grave were heavily visited by tourists who braved the narrow, winding Hana Highway all the way to Kipahulu, that is, until a few years ago when the building and grounds had to be sealed off from the public.

“There was nothing holding [the church] up but friction,” said Sherman. “If you shook it in one corner, you could have probably collapsed the whole building. I’m not exaggerating.”

That all changed when the Hawai’i Conference Foundation reached out to the community for support. Using funds from an endowment established years ago by two prominent church families—the Lindberghs and the Pryors—volunteers donated their time and resources to restore the church to its former luster.

Guiding the restoration was the Palapala Ho’omau Preservation Society, which is composed of Lindbergh and Pryor heirs, along with one local UCC member. The Society found a building contractor willing to provide services for free and an architect who worked at a reduced rate out of love for the church.

“Charles Lindbergh is an icon, a national hero, who felt this church was a very spiritual place that was close to the heavens,” said Michael Spalding, President of the Society. “People come from around the world to visit his grave and feel the spirituality and reverence of this location.”

Michael said that since its restoration, the church has come to life. Between fifty and seventy people now visit the church daily, and there has already been a wedding and renewal of vows. The wedding was for an aeronautics engineer from Spain who fell in love with the church sixteen years ago and then embarked on a quest to find a bride so that he could return with her to be married at the church.

resource List

One Great Hour of Sharing Promises Better Future

In a world where millions of people are displaced by war and climate-induced natural disasters are escalating, gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) are needed more than ever.



Through OGHS, the Lenten offering of the United Church of Christ, church members provide disaster recovery, refugee support and sustainable development actions that change lives and the world. Right now OGHS dollars are bringing long-term relief for earthquake victims in Nepal and the Philippines; responding to refugee emergencies worldwide; providing food and water to impoverished families; and building holistic development programs including health care, education, small business micro-credit, women’s empowerment, and food sustainability in more than eighty countries.

Gifts to OGHS are the promise of a better future. The suggested OGHS offering date is Sunday, March 6, 2016, although churches may choose to receive this offering any time during the year. Resources for promoting the offering are available at www.ucc.org/oghs.

News briefs are adapted from *UCC News*, the online news portal for the United Church of Christ. For details on these and other stories, visit www.ucc.org/news.

Sale of UCC-Owned Hotel Canceled

In December 2015, the UCC national offices announced that the pending sale of the downtown Cleveland Radisson Hotel was canceled.



Global Management, an Atlanta-based management and investment firm, terminated the purchase agreement for the Radisson Hotel, owned by UCC Hotel Venture, at the conclusion of the initial inspection period.

UCC General Minister and President John Dorhauer

said that, "While we were initially disappointed by Global's decision to terminate, much has changed in the revitalizing Cleveland market since the parties originally entered into the agreement. We are now taking the opportunity to reanalyze all of our options."

The denomination put the property up for sale in February 2015 after an announcement of future real estate redevelopment in the neighborhood.

UCC Environmental Advocates Encourage Leadership After Climate Deal

At the end of 2015, nearly 200 nations approved the first global pact to reverse climate change.

The "Paris Agreement" adopted on December 13 during the climate change conference (COP21) aims to keep global temperatures from rising another degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) between now and 2100. This can be accomplished by limiting greenhouse gas pollution created by human activity. This agreement awaits ratification by 55 governments before taking effect.

UCC environmental advocates are now urging the faith community to participate in a new endeavor. Brooks Berndt, UCC environmental justice minister, says that the denomination's national offices are taking a leadership role by launching a campaign in Greater Cleveland to collect



signatures of interfaith leaders in an agreement to achieve thirty percent renewable energy within five years and then continually increase target goals in five-year increments until one hundred percent renewable energy is achieved.

The UCC is also asking the faith community's help in monitoring the fossil fuel industry and world governments to ensure compliance of the goals set forth by the agreement.

Jim Antal, Massachusetts Conference Minister and a leader in environmental and climate change ministry, believes that this is an opportunity for us to start, not only for the environment, but also for our children and grandchildren.

"It's time for people of faith to step out into the streets and demand that politicians fulfill their obligation to future generations and to the common good," said Antal.

UCC Bylaws Under Review for 2017 Vote

The United Church of Christ Board of Directors is gathering feedback to review potential changes to the denomination's Constitution and Bylaws before the next General Synod in 2017.



In June 2015, proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws were brought before the UCC governing body, but failed to gain two-thirds approval from voting delegates. Among the concerns was the

need for more dialogue and conversation among the settings of the church.

UCC Board members will begin engaging the church in new ways starting this year.

Geoff Brace, chair of the board's Governance Committee, says that the committee is starting the discussion with the amendments of the constitution and bylaws that were brought to General Synod 2015. By March 2016, the committee will have an idea from conference ministers, officers and board on the content of the proposed changes. If revisions are warranted, they will be relayed to the various bodies.

By starting the process now, the Governance Committee and the UCC Board will have twenty-one months to collect information for review and evaluation. These changes will be voted by delegates at General Synod 2017 in Baltimore, Maryland.

"Compared to the process used in the last biennium, we added an entire year to this process, which I think gives the church the opportunity to be more fully engaged," Brace said.

Missionary Visits Hawai'i

Kristine Tisinger transformed lives in Ghana. She recently visited churches on Maui to talk about her two-year term there as a UCC-Disciples Global Ministries missionary.

Working in the rural town of Ho, Kristine ministered to homeless children and teen mothers, teaching English and trades to help lift them out of poverty.



Kristine with some of the Nenyo Habobo students.

Challenges abounded. Many of the teens in her classes became mothers to younger siblings after one or both parents died. Teachers often missed classes because of rundown taxis in Ghana. An hour-long ride could turn into a six-hour affair, she explained.

Kristine also worked with the Nenyo Habobo street kids mission on the outskirts of Ho, providing food, school uniforms, tuition and supplies to sixty homeless children, ages 5 to 24. This year, a sixty-bed dormitory was built for them.

"The kids are very appreciative," said Kristine. "This year was the first year they took their national exams, and we expect all of them to pass."

At Waiola Church in Lahaina, Kristine shared how "contributions from local churches to Our Church's Wider Mission, which helps fund Global Ministries, work miracles in people's lives. Your money makes incredible differences in ways that you could never imagine."

She told the story of Benedicta, a young mother who could not afford tuition. Her prayer for a miracle was answered when Global Ministries donated \$2,000 for scholarships.

Kristine, who grew up in Maui and Texas, said she loved visiting Hawai'i churches because people enjoyed hearing about her work and knowing how Our Church's Wider Mission makes a difference in the world.

After Kristine earns a master's degree in social work, she intends to return to Africa. "Social justice and activism are important parts of my life and faith, and being able to do that kind of work through the church is an amazing opportunity," she said.

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 \$10 will pay for one person's subscription for one year. Gifts may be sent to the Hawai'i Conference UCC, 1848 Nu'uana Ave., Honolulu, HI 96817.



Highlights from the Website

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

Service of Installation

The O'ahu Association installed **Mary Herbig** as Associate Pastor of United Church of Christ—Judd Street on Sunday, January 17.

In Memory:



Fasia Moeone died January 4 at the age of 73. Pastor Moeone was minister of Vai Ole Ola O Kailua Church, meeting at Windward United Church of Christ. Memorial services were held on February 9 and 10 at Windward UCC.

National Youth Event Registration Opens

Registration for the UCC's National Youth Event (NYE), taking place July 26-30, 2016, at Walt Disney World's Coronado Springs Resort Hotel in Buena Vista, Florida, opened January 20.



In addition to participating in worship, educational events and social justice immersion experiences, NYE attendees will be invited to donate their hair to Locks of Love, a non-profit organization that provides

hairpieces to financially disadvantaged children suffering from long-term hair loss after medical treatment. Attendees are encouraged to start growing out their hair now. Visit www.locksoflove.org/ for donor guidelines.

Youth in Hawai'i have been preparing for NYE. O'ahu churches have planned fundraisers, including a spaghetti dinner and silent auction in January. "We estimate that getting to NYE... will cost each of our youth and chaperones approximately \$2,200, not including money for personal expenses and some meals," said Joan Sakaba, member of Kailua Christian Church and fundraising coordinator for the event.



**HAWAII
CONFERENCE**
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HONOLULU, HI
PERMIT NO. 894

1848 Nu'uuanu Avenue * Honolulu, Hawaii 96817

Return Service Requested



February 2016

Around the Conference

Conference Calendar of Events

February 6	Conference Council and Foundation Trustees
February 13	State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches Board
February 15	President's Day (Office Closed)
February 19-20	AHEC 'Aha Halawai
February 27	Church Leaders Event
March 19	AHEC Board of Directors
April 2	Conference Council and Foundation Trustees
April 16	Hawaii Island Association 'Aha Moku-puni
April 29-30	Kauai Association 'Aha Moku-puni

Don't Forget Important Information Online

Many churches are online now, but sometimes they forget to include important information that their visitors need. Check your website or social media page and be sure these things are there:

1. Church name and location, prominently displayed on every page
2. Directions to your church (or better yet, link to a map app)
3. Time of worship, Bible study, Sunday school, and other programs
4. Contact information (emails, phone numbers, addresses, social media links)
5. Statement or description of your church, ministers and ministries
6. Photos of real people in your church
7. A "donate" button for online giving (if you're set up for this)

Most important of all, reduce clutter and keep it inviting and easy to read. For more, see the article on page 3.