



HAWAI'I CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

May 18, 2018

Dear Members of our Hawai'i Conference UCC,

For weeks we have been witnessing the awesome movements of nature disastrously impacting human beings and human built things in the Puna district on the slopes of Kilauea. Those of you reaching out in the midst of smoke, fire, earthquakes, and explosive eruptions to care for those immediately affected are heroes of the human spirit, and we salute you.


Those of us anxiously watching and praying from a safer distance want you to know we are with you and eager to help. The Hawai'i Conference staff fields reports and calls daily about the developing situation and needs. Our national setting of the United Church of Christ is reaching out with One Great Hour of Sharing emergency funds, and many generous folk have been building up our Hawai'i Disaster Relief Fund locally to distribute as impacts are assessed.

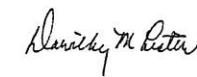
Our three churches in Puna, Kalapana Maunakea First Hawaiian Congregational Church, Opihikao Congregational Church, and Puula UCC, have had to cancel or move their services and school programs due to road closures and the red alert, especially affecting Opihikao. Church members, friends and relatives in the area have needed to find new housing and storage as a result of mandatory evacuations and poor air quality. And no one knows how long this will last or how much more or exactly where lava, ash, and vog may yet still erupt.


In all the uncertainty, let us remind one another of what we *do* know as brothers and sisters in Christ. Through the earthquakes, wind and fire, the "still small voice" of God never ceases. It is a voice that calls us out of our caves of fear and isolation to witness to the presence of Ke Akua among us through acts of healing and self-giving. Let us hold one another close as creation groans—waiting for us, the ones of God—to be revealed as people of active faith, hope, and love.

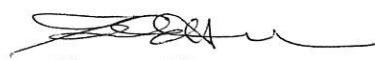
In Christ's Aloha,


Gabrielle Chavez,
Interim Conference Minister


Richard Kamanu,
Associate Conference Minister


Dorothy Lester,
Acting Associate Conference
Minister


Kenneth Makuakane
Associate Conference Minister
Papa Makua


Sherman Hee,
Executive Director
Hawai'i Conference Foundation