

Five Things Successful Moderators Do

BY CAROLINE PETERS BELSOM,
CONFERENCE COUNCIL CHAIR

You have just been elected the Moderator, President or Chairperson of the Church Board of Trustees or the Church Council. Whatever the title, we are talking about the person who leads the group that is responsible for handling the day-to-day management of non-pastoral staff and church operations, including church assets/liabilities and church relationships within and without the church community. The bylaws of the church will more specifically describe the myriad of responsibilities you have agreed to undertake. Here are a few suggestions for effectively executing those responsibilities.

1. Know the contents of all documents governing church personnel and activities.

Church governing documents include the Charter or Articles of Incorporation,



the bylaws, policies, procedures and rules as adopted by the church. Read them; have copies on hand during meetings; have them reviewed periodically. Over time, their content should evolve with changing conditions within the church, the congregation and/or the community. A Documents Review Committee can suggest revisions/amendments as necessary (follow the procedures set out in each document to revise or amend it).

2. Ensure that current and historical records of the church are properly maintained.

Church records include the governing documents, records relating to church personnel, membership, assets/liabilities, insurance, activities, finances, general church correspondence, meeting minutes, and church contracts/agreements. Have a written Records Retention Policy that specifies what records are kept, by whom, where, and for how long. It should include procedures for destruction of records upon the expiration of the retention period. Records that are kept in one location are easier to manage. A Records or Archival or Church History Committee can undertake the task of collecting and storing records on a regular basis.

3. Conduct well-planned meetings that are organized around specific objectives.

Without a written agenda a moderator will have difficulty

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Prevent Abuse in the Church

Shocking headlines scream of sexual abuse by people in politics, athletics, the entertainment industry, and the church. However, many incidences of abuse are not reported or, if reported, do not make headlines. When abuse of any kind occurs in a church, not only are the individuals involved harmed, but many people's faith can be shaken.

The Insurance Board, which serves the United Church of Christ and three other denominations, offers a template of policies addressing safe conduct. The Insurance Board has chosen the title SafeConduct™ for their resources. This trademarked term may be used by any church within the denomination. The title was



Courtesy cliparting.com

chosen to focus on the importance of personal behavior and personal responsibility in abuse prevention. The procedures are expressed as imperatives (shall, will).

Responsibility for specific actions are assigned to individuals by title,

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Back to Basics

BY GABRIELLE CHAVEZ, INTERIM CONFERENCE MINISTER

As this issue of *The Friend* deals with “nuts and bolts” of church life, let’s begin with four critical elements in our ecclesiastical DNA that define what the church is and does. Appreciate where your church is strong and consider anew this description of church.

Biblically and theologically understood, the church is: **a loving community** (*koinonia* in Greek), **a serving community** (*diakonia*), **a worshiping community** (*leitourgia*), and **a teaching community** (*kerygma*). These four basic traits show up in the earliest descriptions of the New Testament church in Acts 2:37-46, which says, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers...they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need....”

Koinonia

Just about every church I’ve ever visited understands the basic importance of being a *koinonia*—a loving—community. If you ask church goers why they keep coming back, especially the long-term members, the top answer is for the



feeling of ‘*ohana*, of acceptance, of being at home. *Koinonia* is so important that sometimes churches ignore strongly-held

disagreement to avoid conflict. This backfires and makes for what has been called pseudo-community, an unattractive vibe which visitors can sense at the front door. Just like any family, the ties that bind grow stronger when we honestly face issues and humbly seek to resolve them in a spirit of truth and love. Churches that do the work to be an honest loving community will radiate an irresistible welcome and grace to a suffering world.

Diakonia

Most churches understand a basic reason for their existence is “to serve, not be served” and have numerous missions and outreach ministries. These also need to be honestly evaluated by regularly asking, “What does our community need? What are the resources we have to share (spiritual and material)? What gifts have we

received that we are called to share? What does the Lord require of us?”

Leitourgia

Most of our current church square footage is designed and used for a form of communal worship that we have inherited, an-hour-or-so worship service on Sundays and special occasions. It is a familiar and comfortable experience for the dwindling number of people who attend many of our HCUCC churches. If this describes your situation, go beyond trying to experiment with updates to the “old wineskin” in order to get more people to come, and instead ask, “What is the essence of worship?”

Worship is communing with God. It is the embodiment of the great commandment to “Love the Lord your God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength,” which for Christians is inseparable from the second great commandment, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” The elements of worship, such as music, prayer, teaching, or engaging in service and loving community, can be practiced in any combination, in any form, at any time. Our Plan’s strategic initiative #3 is “Explore new ways of being church.” Rethinking worship is basic and promises revival.

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controlling the flow of the meeting. Send out a written agenda and all handouts relating to agenda items at least three days prior to the meeting. At the beginning of your term, work with your board/council members to establish ground rules for the meeting are that are based on common sense and common courtesy. Begin and end each meeting on time by pre-setting the time you will spend on each agenda item. Know how actions are taken (motion, second, discussion, vote), and follow the process.

4. Periodically remind board/council members of their fiduciary duties to the church.

The Duty of Loyalty requires a member always to act in the best interest of the church when taking any action and to timely disclose any conflicts of interest that arise regarding an issue under consideration.

The Duty of Care requires a member to act as any reasonable and prudent person would act in the same position or situation. Often this means to be informed about an issue by attending meetings, asking questions, reading documents and doing additional research, as necessary, prior to voting.

5. Take on the church role appropriate to the situation and to your vested authority.

A person who has the title of Moderator or Church Leader is a member of the congregation and a representative of the church depending on the circumstances. Always know in what role you have been called upon to appear so you respond appropriately. For example, a member of the congregation establishes a different relationship with community leaders than does a church leader appearing in an official capacity and authorized to represent the church.

Has Your Church Signed up for b1?

Many of you have already heard about the **b1** platform that is being developed, but for many of you this may be the first time. **b1** is a revolutionary new suite of technology for all churches in our conference that will combine web-site, a mobile app, SMS messaging (text messaging), e-news, and social media into one cohesive, affordable platform. There are financial benefits to signing up early.



Tracy Barnowe, Minister for Church Vitality, is scheduling meetings to explain what **b1** is and what it does, answer questions, gather feedback from churches that will be used in its development, and collect information from churches that want to sign up. Visit <http://www.hcucc.org/b1> for the latest updates and to learn more about **b1**. Feel free to contact Tracy Barnowe directly to learn more: tbarnowe@hcucc.org or 510-703-0108.

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not to groups or committees.

The Insurance Board also offers online training for staff and volunteers. Training and swift action following an allegation protect vulnerable people and the church. In Hawai'i, churches are required to report observation of child and elder abuse and neglect.

Being alert to and interrupting inappropriate behavior early and establishing and communicating standards of conduct can help prevent further abuse.

In instituting or reviewing policies, consider the Insurance Board's updated recommendations. Approve the policies and train people to use them. Once policies are adopted, church staff and leaders are responsible for carrying them out.

The UCC has procedures for dealing with pastoral misconduct, and Associations in

the Hawai'i Conference have conducted fitness reviews of pastors with the outcome that some may never serve as an authorized minister again; others have been assigned a monitored growth program. Church leaders, the pastor and family, the person harmed and family, and the entire congregation are affected by charges of misconduct. But, so are all the above if the issue is not brought to light.

Anyone who knows about questionable behavior by a pastor or other authorized minister regarding emotional, financial, physical, or sexual conduct may contact the Conference Minister for guidance. Concerns about a pastor's fitness for ministry should be reported to the Conference Minister, the Associate Conference Minister, or the chair of the Association's Committee on Ministry.

Parental Permission and Medical Consent Forms

While release forms cannot avoid liability for injuries to minors, there are other forms that churches should consider. For example, churches should not allow a minor to participate in any church activity (such as camping, boating, swimming, hiking, or sporting events) unless the child's parents or legal guardians sign a form that

1. consents to their child participating in the specified activity;
2. certifies that the child is able to participate in the event (e.g., if the activity involves boating or swimming, the parents or guardians should certify that the child is able to swim);
3. lists any allergies or medical conditions that may be relevant to a physician in the event of an emergency;
4. lists any activities that the parents or guardians do not want the child to engage in; and
5. authorizes a designated individual to make emergency medical decisions for their child in the event that they cannot be reached.

Ideally, the form should be signed by both parents or guardians (if there are two), and the signatures should be notarized. If only one parent or guardian signs, or the signatures are not notarized, the legal effectiveness of the form is diminished. Having persons sign as witnesses to a parent's signature is not as good as a notary's acknowledgment, but it is better than a signature without a witness.

The form should require the parent or guardian to inform the church immediately of any change in the information presented, and it should state that it is valid until revoked by the person who signed it. The parent or guardian should sign both in his or her own capacity as parent or guardian, and in a representative capacity on behalf of the minor child.

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You can also go directly to the article at this address:

<https://www.churchlawandtax.com/cltr/2017/november-december/parental-permission-and-medical-consent-forms.html?logout=true>

See: www.insuranceboard.org/safety-resources/safeconduct-workbench.

Happenings Around the Conference



Richard Lee, Kekapa Lee, Tom Fujita on Kekapa's last Sunday at First Chinese Church of Christ



Thomas Tsen, Kekapa Lee, Laura Tsen



Nu'uuanu Congregational Church celebrated Neal MacPherson at a luncheon in honor of his retirement



Central Union Church members attend Interfaith Taizé service



Trina Zelle and Phil Reller at her retirement and Aloha luncheon at Manoa Valley Church.

Photo by Ron Hashiro



Trina Zelle is presented with a flowering plant at her Aloha luncheon.

Photo by Roy Miyahira



Hawai'i delegation at Authorized Ministry in the 21st Century (AM21) gathering in San Diego, CA



Tri-Isle Association Christmas dinner



Kekapa Lee at his Aloha dinner upon his retirement

The Culture of Call

BY JACK BELSOM, FORMATION MISSIONAL TEAM CHAIR

“Me? Called to ministry?” Christ calls us to follow and to serve, and we have both a vocation to be disciples and to minister. Have we lost the sense that we are all called to be in ministry? Who is called to authorized ministry? And how is that call nurtured, examined, and recognized by the church? Those were the questions that were explored at the recent Authorized Ministry in the 21st Century (AM21) gathering. From across the United Church of Christ, conference staff and Committee on Ministry members came to discuss those issues.

Pastoral Search Committees often request “local candidates.” We only have local candidates when congregations create and nurture a culture of call. Families, Associations and schools, including seminaries, have roles to play in nurturing and equipping people for ministry, but congregations must nurture a culture of call. It must be clear to all members that Christ calls all of us to share in ministry. Our ministries begin with baptism because all are baptized as disciples of Christ, and, for the rest of our lives, we live into that call. Local churches must play a key role in that nurture.

One of the marks of effective



ministers is that they exhibit a spiritual foundation and commit to ongoing spiritual practice. Who was the first to teach you to pray? How has your practice of prayer grown and changed over the years? What role did your home congregation play in that? When and how did you learn to engage the sacred stories and traditions of the church? How did the worship and teaching of your home congregation nurture your growth?

Those participating in a Tri-Isle Workshop on Authorized Ministry were introduced to *The Marks of Faithful and Effective Authorized Ministers of the United Church of Christ* (available from UCC Resources at www.ucc.org). As we discussed various marks, we saw that we all create a culture that nurtures and supports living into Christ's call.

ECO 4 Youth

We are called by a creative God to care for all of creation—from ourselves and our neighbors, to the land we live on and the sea that connects us. In our islands we are taught *Mālama 'Āina*: to care for the land so it can continue to sustain present and future generations. Through caring for the land, we care for its people, God's people.

The Hawai'i Conference needs volunteers from all of our churches to take part in developing and leading local youth camps on their island focusing

on creation care. “**ECO 4 YOUTH**” is a new initiative by the HCUC Justice and Witness Missional

Team seeking to provide Earth Care Opportunities for youth through shared experiences that demonstrate justice for our earth and all life upon it.

Let's give our youth opportunities to put their faith in action by participating in a ministry that affects us all: the stewardship of the earth.

Learn more about **ECO 4 YOUTH** and how you and your church can be involved: www.hcucc.org/justice-camps-for-youth



mission Offering

One Great Hour of Sharing:

In today's world fraught with climate-induced natural disasters and an unprecedented refugee crisis, your 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 transform lives by responding to refugee, sustainable development and disaster needs in 138 countries. Around the world, OGHS dollars are helping to provide 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. Domestically, OGHS supports immigration assistance and

disaster response.

Nearly 65 percent of UCC congregations participate in the annual OGHS offering, and 95 cents of every dollar goes directly to mission programming.

Gifts to OGHS are the promise of a better future. The suggested OGHS offering date is Sunday, March 31, 2019, 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.

Hawai'i Conference Minister Search Update

BY ELWOOD KITA, SEARCH COMMITTEE CHAIR



The Conference Minister Search Committee is progressing on schedule to present a candidate to

the 2019 'Aha Pae'āina in June. Two candidates with extensive conference level experience will be interviewed

in person during February. The Conference Council will act on the candidate recommendation at its March 30 meeting. Following Council approval, information about the candidate will be distributed and plans will be made with the five Associations for opportunities to meet and talk with the Conference Minister candidate. Visits are targeted for the last week in May.

The committee asks you to keep our conference in your prayers that the candidate selected feels a call to lead the Hawai'i Conference through the Strategic Plan implementation and the developing changes in its relationship with the Hawai'i Conference Foundation. We feel blessed in our work together on the Conference Minister search process.

UCF Names New President and CEO

Charles Buck, former Hawai'i Conference Minister and local church pastor, has been elected as the new president and CEO of the United Church Funds (UCF), the institutional investment ministry of the United Church of Christ. He will become President/CEO-Elect on



March 25. Affirming his election, John C. Dorhauer, UCC general minister and president, stated, "Rev. Buck is widely recognized as one

of our gifted leaders. He is a leader of great integrity, wisdom, intellect, and devotion, who will apply all those skills to the management of UCF. We offer our prayers for him in the time of transition, and for the fruits of his labor in this new position."

The Science of Sabbath: How People of Faith Are Claiming its Benefits

"Technology Shabbat," a modern twist on an ancient religious practice, is attracting the attention of burned-out millennials and others, including people of various faiths, who are exhausted by today's faced-paced, technology-driven world. Shabbat, also known as Sabbath, is the day of the week reserved for rest and worship in Judaism and Christianity. Researchers have discovered that there is some science to support the idea that practicing a day of rest, including time away from digital devices and



social media, has mental and physical health benefits. Practicing a technology shabbat can benefit people of any faith as well as those who don't believe in any particular religion.

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



God is still speaking

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The Friend is published six times a year by:
The Hawai'i Conference of the United Church of Christ
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Highlights from the Website

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

Pastoral Changes

Kekapa Lee retired as Senior Pastor of The First Chinese Church of Christ in Honolulu on December 31, 2018.

Wallace Ryan Kuroiwa retired as Interim Minister of Lili'uokalani Protestant Church on December 31, 2018.

Trina Zelle retired as Interim Minister of Manoa Valley Church on December 31, 2018.

Harriet Clara Daog retired as Kahu of Opihika'o Congregational Church on January 15, 2019.

Neal MacPherson retired as Interim Minister of Nu'uaniu Congregational Church on February 3, 2019.

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Kerygma

The gospel message, or *kerygma*, is what ignited the birth of the church in the first place, the good news of the possibility of heaven on earth! Jesus not only proclaimed this gospel, he demonstrated the way to the kin-dom of heaven on earth in acts of power and sacrifice by his incarnation, baptism, transfiguration, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.

The most basic need in our churches today is also the #1 initiative and priority of the HCUCS Strategic Plan: "Training in theological and spiritual formation" or *kerygma*. All of us, not just the pastoral leaders, need this at every stage of life. When churches accomplish this well, it is living water in the desert of our driven and materialistic culture. I like how one author describes what spiritual communities who want to have a future must offer: a "conveyor belt" for spiritual growth, teaching how to "Wake up, Grow up, Clean up, and Show up."

The Christian church at its best has always done this through its loving community, service, worship, and teaching. Let the emerging vision of the HCUCS 'ohana be realized as a "unified, radiant and transforming expression of the Body of Christ" by refreshing the basics of church for our time and place.

In Christ with you,
Gabrielle

In Memory



Bill Hawk, 83, retired pastor, died on December 8, 2018, in Montana. He previously served at Imiola Congregational Church in Waimea and as Interim Minister at Hokuloa United Church of Christ in Puako.



Harold Jow, 99, Pastor Emeritus of United Church of Christ—Judd Street, died in January 2019, in California. He served as Senior Pastor at UCC—Judd Street in Honolulu from 1944-1956 and again from 1963-1985.

Conference Calendar of Events

February 23	Church Leaders Event
March 20 – 22	Pastoral Leaders' Retreat
March 26	Kuhio Day (Office closed)
March 30	Conference Council and Foundation Trustees
April 18 – 19	Maundy Thursday/Good Friday (Office Closed)
April 27	State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches Board
	Tri-Isle 'Aha MokuPuni

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'uaniu Avenue, Honolulu, HI, 96817.



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Return Service Requested

February 2019

Ka Papa Ho'olāla

Strategic Initiative #7 Update

BY JAYNE RYAN KUROIWA, ADMINISTRATION MISSIONAL TEAM CHAIR

At the 2018 'Aha Pae'āina, delegates resoundingly approved a strategic plan with eight Strategic Initiatives for congregations, Associations and the Conference to develop in order to fully live out our mission and ministry over the next decade.

Two important efforts have already begun regarding Conference level implementation of Strategic Initiative #7: Organizational support of the vision, which seeks to “examine and then align the governance and committee structure within the Conference to be more inclusive, participatory and effective.”

In October 2018, the Membership of the Hawai'i Conference Foundation, the entity which is the steward of the assets of the Hawai'i Conference, voted to revise the HCF Charter and Bylaws in ways that would make HCF better able to respond to legal and real estate matters. An eleven-person Board of Directors, five of whom will be selected by the Hawai'i Conference, will replace the current Trustees and Membership structure.

This decision was the culmination



of a two-year legal review of the Foundation's governing documents, at least two meetings of the Membership with the Foundation's legal advisors, and the prior review and recommendation of the Foundation's Trustees.

Copies of the revised Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation were sent in January to the congregations and pastors in the Hawai'i Conference UCC. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document was included in the mailing. Subsequently, at the February 2 Members meeting, the members (which include all the HCF

Trustees plus the Conference Council) voted to extend the deadline for implementation until July 1, 2020.

Next steps include preparation of Hawai'i Conference Bylaws revisions, made necessary by the HCF amendments, for the 'Aha Pae'āina's consideration, and advance planning to adjust staff and allocate assets in order to align with these revisions.

In a January 2019 working retreat, the Hawai'i Conference Council met with Consultant Cynthia Scherr to review the current Conference governance structure and to look at ways to adapt the structure to better fit its newly adopted mission, vision, and strategic initiatives. An ad hoc Conference committee is being formed to work with this initial creative effort with the goal of bringing a proposal for modification of the current structure to the upcoming 'Aha Pae'āina.

In its March 2019 meeting the Conference Council will deliberate on how to align the 2019-2020 Conference budget with the Strategic Initiatives.