

**Strategic Initiative #8: Innovation & Engagement.** Innovation & Engagement was birthed out of a desire to provoke and support congregations in the HCUCC to create the church we want to be in the future.

**Mark 2:22**

And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.

**John 9:1-3 (The Message)**

An eyewitness of Jesus' ministry writes: "Walking down the street, Jesus saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked, 'Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, causing him to be born blind?' Jesus said, 'You're looking for someone to blame. There is no such cause-effect here. Look instead for what God can do.'"

**II Corinthians 5:17**

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Guiding Image: Wa'a



Wa'a crew relied solely on the stars, the sun, ocean swells and other signs from nature to help guide and direct them on their voyages. The art of wayfinding in such a vessel was lost until the construction and maiden voyage of the Hōkūle'a in the 1970's. The Hawaiian star compass was developed by master navigator Nainoa Thompson in 1978-1980.

"Hōkūle'a, our Star of Gladness, began as a dream of reviving the legacy of exploration, courage, and ingenuity that brought the first Polynesians to the archipelago of Hawai'i. The canoes that brought the first Hawaiians to their island home had disappeared from earth. Cultural extinction felt dangerously close to many Hawaiians when artist Herb Kane dreamed of rebuilding a double-hulled sailing canoe similar to the ones that his ancestors sailed. Though more than 600 years had passed since the last of these canoes had been seen, this dream brought together people of diverse backgrounds and professions. Since she was first built and launched in the 1970s, Hōkūle'a continues to bring people together from all walks of life. She is more than a voyaging canoe—she represents the common desire shared by the people of Hawaii, the Pacific, and the World to protect our most cherished values and places from disappearing." (<https://www.hokulea.com/voyages/our-story/>)

When we think of God's vastness of creation, we can take comfort in knowing that there is, indeed, room for both tradition and making room for new beginnings. We need not move forward in fear, but rather with excitement for what God has in store for us as communities of faith.

## Context

Like the Hōkūle'a revised the legacy of exploration of the Polynesians, so too is the church revised by God. In her book *The Great Emergence: How Christianity Is Changing and Why*, author and religion professor Phyllis Tickle used the analogy of "The 500-Year Rummage Sale" to describe religious change over the years. Tickle said that historically, the church "cleans house" roughly every 500 years, holding what she calls a "giant rummage sale," deciding what to dispose and what to keep, making room for new things.

The culture is shifting beneath our feet. It is more and more rare that we find people wandering in and finding their way to our congregations on a Sunday morning. The Church is no longer the social or even religious center it once was in the larger society. It appears that ministry that remains behind walls will suffocate. Ministry needs to expand beyond what once was, into what will be and to where people are. In our communities and digital spaces. We can no longer define our success by the number of people in the pew and dollars in the collection plates. We must be willing to meet and engage with people wherever they are.

## Initial Responsibility

Innovation & Engagement Missional Team