

'Aha Passes Resolutions, Prepares for Strategic Planning

Delegates to the 'Aha Pae'aina, the annual meeting of the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ, unanimously approved two resolutions related to Kalaupapa and immigrants.

Meeting at the Kamehameha Schools Maui campus on June 16 and 17, delegates commended the efforts to establish a memorial at Kalaupapa (on Moloka'i) to honor the over 8,000 persons with Hansen's Disease exiled to the remote peninsula from 1866 to 1969. The resolution encourages individuals and churches to learn more about the history of Kalaupapa and to support the fundraising efforts for the memorial.



2016 "5 for 5" churches in mission giving to OCWM and the four special church-wide offerings

A second resolution, "Encouraging Immigrant Welcoming Congregations," responds to the growing hostility toward immigrants and threats of deportations, and encourages churches to become "immigrant [\(continued on page 5\)](#)

General Synod Looks Toward Future

By Rev. Eric Anderson, Church of the Holy Cross



Hawai'i's delegation to the Thirty-First General Synod of the United Church of Christ joined nearly 2,000 registrants in Baltimore for five days of dynamic worship, inspiring speakers, intense conversation, consideration of denominational priorities, and a step into the future with a new church-wide initiative entitled Three Great Loves.

Delegates overwhelmingly elected Traci Blackmon, a noted leader in the Black Lives Matter movement that emerged after the shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, as Executive Minister for Justice and Witness Ministries. Traci urged the entire church to proclaim that God is present and calls us to take risks in building a just world for all.

Delegates also approved bylaws that will permit the creation of new church officers at the United Church Board level. They overwhelmingly endorsed an emergency resolution, "The Earth is the Lord's—Not Ours to Wreck," calling for action to end human contributions to climate change.

Appropriately, love of creation is part of the Three Great Loves initiative announced by General Minister and President John Dorhauer. The program calls on churches and other UCC settings across the nation to submit stories over the next two years about how their work illustrates love of neighbor, love of children and love of creation. Learn more about Three Great Loves: <http://bit.ly/2gQR6qt>.

Among the most powerful moments of General Synod was when ancient Hawaiian chants soared through the convention center as the Hawai'i delegation bid farewell to outgoing Conference Minister Charles Buck. The assembly paused in silence before rising in applause for the aloha declared and shared with power and grace.

Read more about what happened at Synod at <http://bit.ly/2vJUyFO>. You can also view photos, videos and blog posts from Hawai'i participants on the Hawai'i Conference website.

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Hawai'i Shares Synod Reflections

Hawai'i Conference delegates and Members in Discernment wrote reflections of their experiences at General Synod. Below are excerpts edited for length and clarity. Read their full reflections at <http://bit.ly/2tOCgC4>.

"At General Synod, the UCC became the first organization in the United States, religious or secular, to publicly proclaim its 'solidarity with, acceptance of and support for' adult survivors of child abuse and neglect. I was part of the committee assigned to this resolution. As clergy and laity, we must become allies to survivors who pray in our pews."
- Linda Petrucelli, Hawai'i Island

"This was so much more than I thought it would be. It made me so proud to be part of the UCC. We voted on about 15 resolutions dealing with issues such as being immigrant-welcoming and voicing the urgency of climate change. The youth delegates spoke out about resolutions they supported and were against (this is NOT easy). There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God (Psalm 46:4). That river is us."
- Laura Young, O'ahu

"My first Synod was an exciting five days. It was impressive to see Christians from across our country and world worshipping together and praising God. The music was outstanding and some of the main speakers were awe-inspiring. They brought me to my feet, cheering and wiping tears at the same time."
- Diane Meyer, Maui

"It was so affirming to realize that we are part of a positive and loving witness in a broken world. I found one quote and discussion to be especially inspirational: 'Make a positive investment in cultural appreciation' — a worthy goal to take from this wonderful experience."
- Glenn Frazier, Kaua'i

"The biggest takeaway for me is the process, discussion and voting on proposed social justice resolutions. I plan to share the results with our Kaua'i Association and Kaua'i Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches in hopes that our churches can decide which resolutions they want to support."
- Isaiah Ka'auwai, Kaua'i

"Delegates were reminded of a ground-breaking study published by the UCC Commission for Racial Justice in 1985 on 'Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States.' Keynote speaker Aaron Mair, the first black president of the Sierra Club, said that study 'lit the fuse for environmental change.' Together we have a powerful, prophetic impact."
- Jayne Ryan Kuroiwa, O'ahu

"The General Synod atmosphere was on 'fire.' Each event sent a message that 'God is still speaking!' Hawai'i Conference delegates and staff showed the audience that we are a family of God when on the final day of speak-outs we honored Conference Minister Charles Buck with

sendoff chants and the laying of healing hands upon Kahu."
- Pualani Muraki, Hawai'i Island

"There was a palpable feeling of energy and drive to do justice and the work of the church. I encourage you to read the Synod resolutions and look to how we can put them into action in our personal lives, worship and justice work."
- Sue Smith, Hawai'i Island

"Attending this General Synod opened my eyes to how much I value the UCC. Last Sunday I was inspired to ride my bike for an hour and a half, one way, to attend my nearest UCC church. We are the UCC ready and willing to make the world an equal place for all God's creatures!" - Joshua Weible, O'ahu

"I was amazed at the production of General Synod. The youth and young adults did a great job of presenting their thoughts and ideas to the assembly. Worship music was upbeat and inspired clapping, shouting and dancing—something we in Hawai'i are not accustomed to."
- Haleaka Martin, O'ahu



Hawai'i delegates gather at General Synod.

"I took the UCC History, Polity and Theology course, meeting for 34.5 hours in class, 13 hours discussing what we learned by attending Synod and 10.5 hours in extra activities. The important takeaway from Synod is the knowledge of the united and uniting God. I am grateful to our Lord for this foundational experience."
- Pualani Akaka, Member in Discernment

"Attending General Synod made me remember what I had almost forgotten: that the UCC is a progressive church whose head, Jesus Christ, was and is a social, political and religious activist. I have shared with my congregation (Kahikolu Congregational Church) some of the highlights and conclusions of my experience."
- Naleen Andrade, Member in Discernment



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Adult Day Care at Churches Meets Needs

With Hawai'i's elderly population projected to rise dramatically in coming years, the need for compassionate care is pressing. Central Union Church and Waipahu UCC on O'ahu are helping to meet this need through adult day care on their campuses.

Established in 2002, Central Union Church Adult Day Care and Day Health Center serves 109 clients, age 89 on average, who benefit from services and activities that allow them to live more active and fulfilling lives.



Clients at Central Union Church host a party.

"Our mission and vision statement is to 'engage and embrace all as we seek to embody Christ,'" said Evelyn Aczon Hao, moderator of Central Union Church. "Having this service on our campus is sharing our legacy with everyone—not just members of the church, but members of the community."

Operated by the Arcadia Family of Companies, which traces its roots to the founding of Arcadia Retirement Residence by Central Union Church in 1967, the adult day care is a non-residential program that supports clients' daily living needs. Clients often live with disabilities or chronic conditions such as Alzheimer's Disease, and enrollment can help maintain physical and cognitive functions and prolong a person's ability to live at home.

"What makes our program special is we offer intergenerational activities with the students at Central Union Church Preschool," said program director Stacey Young. "We have children and elders regularly interacting."

Stacey said the proximity of ministers skilled in counseling also benefits clients. For those enrolled by family members seeking respite care or increased socialization for their loved one, adjusting to a new setting can be difficult, she explained.

From a grief and loss perspective, "Being able to speak with ministers at the church has helped our licensed social worker learn how to help clients who are grieving," added Stacey.

Located in the church's Family Life Center, the day care offers daily meals, exercise, singing and tai chi, as well as games, painting, arts and crafts, bingo, and more.

"The fact that Central Union has an adult day care was a factor that drew me to serve at this church," said Associate Pastor Brandon Duran. "I was impressed by this ministry being able to meet an important need in the community."

The need for senior care extends beyond Honolulu. In west O'ahu, Waipahu UCC rents its social hall to the Aged to Perfection adult day care. The partnership began in 2008, when executive director Harrison Peters inquired about using the facility.

"The church preschool had recently closed and they were looking to start a new ministry," recalled Harrison.

Harrison outlined a proposal to church leaders and the congregation, and a unanimous vote endorsing the program followed. The facility opened in 2014.

"An adult day care was ideal for our older congregation and community," said Waipahu UCC member Irene Nomura, who serves on Aged to Perfection's board of directors. "We rebuilt our social hall and geared it toward an adult day care."

Featured activities at the center include Bible storytelling, spiritually-themed skits, massage therapy, stretching, exercise, and a bingo fellowship led by a Waipahu UCC volunteer.

"Our Waipahu UCC volunteers understand what we are trying to accomplish and demonstrate the love of Christ," said Harrison, who is open to the possibility of establishing adult day care at other churches.

"It would be great if other churches can start adult day cares, but you don't have to start there," said Brandon Duran. "If your church has a little extra space and someone is willing to donate time, even programs like exercise classes and game time can begin to address the need for senior care."



A client works on solving a puzzle at Waipahu UCC.

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'uuanu Ave., Honolulu, HI 96817.

Conference Gathers in June for 'Aha Pae'aina on Maui

The 195th 'Aha Pae'aina of the Hawai'i Conference was held June 14-17, 2017, at Kamehameha Schools Maui. There were nearly 140 people in attendance.



Hawai'i Delegates Attend General Synod 31 in Baltimore

Delegates from Hawai'i and throughout the United Church of Christ gathered in Baltimore from June 30-July 4 for the Thirty-First General Synod. The biennial event featured nearly 2,000 registrants.



(‘Aha Passes, continued from page 1)

welcoming congregations.” Suggestions for doing so include learning about the causes of immigration and migration, building relationships through face-to-face encounters, and engaging in prayerful action that supports immigrants. (A similar resolution was passed by the UCC General Synod two weeks later.)

Although the nearly 140 participants at this year’s ‘Aha were less in number than previous years, the levels of enthusiasm and engagement were high from opening worship and plenary to the closing business session. Different this year was the schedule, which did not include workshops or a keynote speaker. Instead, the Conference Council, following up on a Conference-wide assessment process this last year, focused the agenda on preparing for strategic planning.

The preparation began in the first plenary session with “holy listening.” Caroline Miura, UCC minister and Kaua’i chaplain, introduced a process of hearing what someone is saying and feeling without offering judgment or advice.

Following this were plenary sessions introducing the proposed strategic planning process. Cynthia Scherr, a management consultant from Oregon hired by the Council to facilitate the process, began by inviting ‘Aha participants to write prayers expressing their hopes and visions for the Conference. She then explained the work of effecting strategic planning, and recommended that the process not begin until an intentional interim conference minister is in place.



Hawai’i Conference gifts a plaque to Kamehameha Schools Maui.

Delegates also heard an update from the search committee for the intentional interim conference minister; recognized 45 churches for being “5 for 5” in mission

giving; approved the Conference budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1; and elected members to the Conference Council.

Newly elected to the Council were Kealahou Alika, Pastor of Keawala’i Church, as Vice-Moderator; David Iha, member of Lihue Christian Church, as Chair of the Administration Missional Team; and Jack Belsom, retired minister, as Chair of the Formation Missional Team. Re-elected members were Linn Garcia, member of Windward UCC, as Treasurer; and Mary Herbig, Associate Pastor at UCC-Judd Street, as an at-large member. Also elected was Jun Lagon, Pastor of Filipino UCC, to the Conference Nominating Committee.

Friday evening at the ‘Aha afforded an opportunity for members of Maui churches to mingle with delegates and visitors through

a “Taste of Maui.” A range of cuisine representing the various cultures in Hawai’i and the Hawai’i Conference was prepared by 11 churches. The festive evening concluded with a time of thanksgiving and farewell to outgoing conference minister Charles Buck.

For more information about the ‘Aha and to view photos, go to: <http://bit.ly/2vJriPi>.

resource List

Neighbors in Need 2017

Giving to the annual Neighbors in Need (NIN) special mission offering has helped churches transform lives in their communities for 17 years.

One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) and its witness among indigenous churches and people. The remaining two-thirds finance UCC justice initiatives, advocacy efforts and direct service projects through grants.

This year, the maximum grant award has increased from \$3,000 to \$5,000. In addition, five “Grass Top Grants” of up to \$10,000 will be awarded to congregations with innovative ideas for advancing justice.

Several Hawai’i Conference churches have received NIN grants in past years for ministries that include feeding the hungry and sponsoring a monthly family movie night.

The 2017 theme for NIN is “Protect the Sacred: In a Just World, Clean Water Is Life.” The suggested date to collect the offering is World Communion Sunday, October 1, but churches may receive it on any Sunday. For more information and to apply for a grant, visit www.ucc.org/nin.

Save the Date: Western Regional Youth Event

Youth from the eight western conferences of the United Church of Christ are invited to the Western Regional Youth Event taking place June 25-29, 2018, in Honolulu. Complete information about the biennial event will be shared as it becomes available.

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.

Traci Blackmon Among Clergy Arrested in D.C.

The Rev. Traci Blackmon is one of several faith leaders who put their bodies on the line for love of neighbors, their health care and for the sake of justice on July 13 at the Capitol. The Executive Minister of the United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries was arrested alongside Moral Movement leader the Rev. William Barber and the Rev. Jennifer Butler from Faith in Public Life, as they, other clergy and dozens of supporters marched against pending healthcare reform that proposes to deny coverage to 22 million people.



Blackmon, quoting the prophet Isaiah, “How awful it will be for those who mandate wickedness and legalize oppression, denying justice to the needy, taking away the rights of the poor,” denounced the Republicans’ latest plan to replace The Affordable Care Act.

Blackmon and Barber were two of 11 interfaith protestors, four men and seven women, taken into custody by U.S. Capitol Police outside Senator McConnell’s office and charged with crowding, obstructing, or incommoding. All 11 paid fines and were released later in the day.

New Funding Campaign to Strengthen Future Ministry

To strengthen the United Church of Christ’s ability to pursue its vision of a just world for all, the denomination is launching the public phase of a campaign that will support the diverse and life-changing work of the church.

The Shaping Our Future Campaign, announced at General Synod 2017 in Baltimore, aims to raise funds for immediate needs and to build a dedicated endowment over the next year that provides financial resources for mission and program initiatives for the Office of General Minister and President.

In the 60-year history of the UCC, there hasn’t been any long-term planning to endow the Office of the General Minister and President. The campaign already has \$2.5 million in funding that has been raised quietly so far.

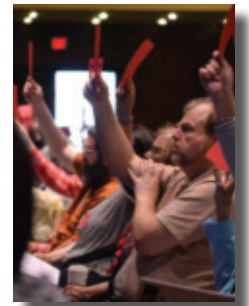
Members of the wider church are now invited to give to the campaign, via the donation page

(<http://bit.ly/2vp0IRE>) on the UCC.org website, designating their gift to ‘Shape Our Future’.

In Historic Vote, Three UCC Conferences Move Toward Union

The Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island Conferences of the United Church of Christ voted decisively to move ahead toward forming a new combined Conference, so that they may have a stronger voice speaking for justice and may more effectively carry out mission and ministry together.

The June 17 votes, taken at the first-ever joint annual meeting of the three bodies in Hartford, Conn., mean that Conference leaders will now develop a formal proposal for a new Conference, comprising of 625 churches in southern New England, which will be brought before a second joint Annual Meeting a year from now in Springfield, Mass.



“I am proud of you,” United Church of Christ General Minister and President the Rev. John Dorhauer told those gathered following the votes. “Your yes today matters, and your yes today casts a vision for the future that was not otherwise available to you. And, my covenant promise to you is that the entire denomination will walk side-by-side with you on whatever journey unfolds.”

The Massachusetts and Connecticut votes were nearly unanimous; Rhode Island delegates approved the measure by a wide margin.

UCC Introduces New Logo



The United Church of Christ has begun the transition to a new logo for the denomination. The logo, last re-designed in 2004, has been updated to reflect both tradition and innovation within the church as it faces the challenges and opportunities of Christian witness in the coming decades.

The new logo’s design and colors are intended to complement the graphic representation of “A Just World for All,” developed to illustrate new Purpose, Vision, and Mission Statements adopted by the national setting of the church last fall.

The new primary UCC logo consists of an updated comma emblem and the words “United Church of Christ.” “God is still speaking,” remains as the UCC’s tagline, and the new logo may be used with or without the tagline.

Highlights from the Website

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

Pastoral Changes

Tony Na'otala began as Pastor of Vai Ole Ola O Kailua on March 27.

Wendi Gordon resigned as Pastor of Ka Hana O Ke Akua Church to take a new call in Texas. Her last Sunday was April 23.

Jack Belsom concluded his interim ministry at Kailua Christian Church on April 23.

Kordell Kekoa ended his chaplaincy ministry at Kamehameha Schools Kapalama and Bishop Memorial Chapel on May 21.

Dorothy Lester began as Licensed Pastor of Lana'i Union Church on Sunday, June 18.

Kiyoshi Gushiken resigned as Japanese Ministry Pastor of Makiki Christian Church to return to Japan. His last day was June 30.

Norma DeSaegher concluded her interim ministry at Waialua United Church of Christ on July 9.

Scott Furukawa began July 10 as the newly called Pastor of Waialua United Church of Christ.

Conference Office Transitions

Lee Henry-Chang, Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister, resigned from the staff of the Hawai'i Conference Office on April 28 to take a new position with a local non-profit agency.

Julie Buto began as Temporary Executive Assistant to the Conference Minister on Monday, May 15.

Sarah Jones resigned May 31 as Pastor of Lana'i Union Church and Associate Conference Minister to begin a new call as a Pacific Health Ministry chaplain serving Wilcox Memorial Hospital on Kaua'i.

Charles Buck's last day as Conference Minister was July 4 at the conclusion of General Synod. The Rev. Dr. Buck resigned after 13 years to relocate to California with his family.

Iese Tuuao began as Acting Conference Minister on July 5. The Rev. Dr. Tuuao will serve until the naming of an intentional interim conference minister, which is expected by September or October.

Service of Installation

Malcolm Carr was installed as Pastor of Lihue Christian Church by the Kaua'i Association on Sunday, May 21.

In Memory of Faithful Servants



Lon Rycraft, retired minister who served churches on Hawai'i Island and Kana'ana Hou-Siloama Church in Kalaupapa before moving to Oregon, died on April 30.



Margery Terpstra, retired minister and Pastor Emeritus of The First Chinese Church of Christ in Hawai'i, died in Sequim, Washington, on May 19.

Conference Calendar of Events

- August 5 Conference Council and Foundation Trustees
- August 12 AHEC Board of Directors
- August 18 Admissions Day
(Office Closed)
- September 4 Labor Day (Office Closed)
- September 28 O'ahu Association Board of Directors
- October 5-7 AHEC 'Aha Halawai
- October 14 Conference Council and Foundation Trustees
- October 27-28 State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches Board



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Our Historical Roots

Thomas Hopu: Pioneer of Christianity in Hawaii

Thomas Hopu, born in 1795 and raised in Kohala, was influential throughout the early missionary years in Hawaii. He aided in translating the Bible, as well as other teaching documents, into Hawaiian. He served as lay pastor of Mokuaikaua Church, the oldest church in Hawaii and what is today a United Church of Christ congregation, delivering powerful sermons, spreading cheer, and ministering to people in need.



Thomas left Hawaii in 1807 on a voyage to America aboard the ship *Triumph*. He sailed with Henry 'Opukaha'ia, Hawaii's first known Christian and scholar, along with Captain Brintnall, a trader who frequented the Sandwich Islands. After studying religion at the Foreign Mission School in New Haven, Connecticut, and following the death of Henry, Thomas desired to return to the islands to spread Christianity to his Hawaiian people.

On October 23, 1819, the Pioneer Company of missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign



Silhouette of Thaddeus
Courtesy of Hawaiian Mission Houses

Missions (ABCFM) from the northeast United States set sail aboard the ship *Thaddeus* for the Hawaiian Islands. Four young Hawaiians joined the Pioneer Company: Thomas, William Kanui, John Honoli'i and Prince George Humehume Kaumuali'i, son

of the King of Kauai.

Thomas went on to serve at Mokuaikaua Church and as spiritual advisor to Kamehameha II and III. Following Henry's death in 1818, the book *Memoirs of Henry Obookiah* was authored by Edwin W. Dwight. It was published as a fundraiser for the Foreign Mission School and to finance ABCFM missions to Hawaii, continuing the legacy of Thomas and other notable Christians who influenced the future of Hawaii.