

Hawai'i's First Church Draws National Attention, Shares Story

Mokuaikaua Church in Kailua-Kona on Hawai'i Island was in the national spotlight recently.

Last month the National Trust for Historic Preservation designated the church, the first established in Hawai'i, as one of America's Eleven Most Endangered Places. The designation was made because of damage done to the church's iconic spire due to time, elements and termites, as well as by the earthquake in 2006 which caused large cracks in the church's lava rock walls.



"We began this process (of restoration) just over a year ago to ensure that Mokuaikaua Church would remain a state and national treasure for generations to come," said David de Carvalho, the church's pastor.

David said that although the fundraising effort is important to the church, its main focus is telling the story of how Christianity *(continued on page 3)*

Highlights of the 192nd 'Aha Pae'aina

The 192nd 'Aha Pae'aina, held June 3-7 on O'ahu, brought together delegates and visitors from around the Hawai'i Conference to worship God, learn from one another, and do the business of the church.

'Aha week opened June 3 with the 'Aha Iki at Kalihi and Moanalua Church, attended by seventy-eight people from Hawaiian churches. The meeting included a celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches.



From June 6 to 7, more than 160 delegates and visitors gathered for the 'Aha Makua hosted by The First Chinese Church of Christ in Hawai'i.

Theologian Rita Nakashima Brock delivered a thought-provoking keynote address on Friday about "moral injury" suffered by war veterans. On Saturday she preached on the creation story in Genesis, touching on themes in her book, *Saving Paradise*.

A favorite part of the 'Aha is the workshops, and this year's offerings were well attended and included topics such as contemplative listening, disaster preparedness, aligning investments with justice, UCC polity, moral injury and soul repair, and building and maintaining friendships (for youth).

Youth participants in the 'Aha Youth Event, led by Kalani Wong, attended the 'Aha Makua, visited two historic Conference churches, sorted clothing at the Institute for Human Services, and went up to Tantalus, overlooking Honolulu, to pray for the city and the 'Aha.

Throughout the 'Aha, the theme "Bind Us Together" was at work. During worship, Boyd and Sharon Matsuyama, members of Puka'ana Congregational Church, were wrapped face-to-face in an almost 175-year-old pink tapa moe and blessed before those gathered as a symbol of unity in God. Throughout the 'Aha Makua, attendees were invited to weave threads in a loom and create a fabric symbolizing the unity of the Conference.

(continued on page 5)

What's Inside

- 2 Power Choices by Charles C. Buck
Stewardship: More than Money by Donald Schmidt
- 3 Stewardship Team Offers Resources
UCC Youth Gather in Seattle
- 4 Faces around the Conference: 'Aha Pae'aina
- 5 South African Theologian Inspires Hope
- 6 UCC News
- 7 Justice and Witness Team Creates Resource Library
Highlights from the Website
In Memory
Resource List: Neighbors in Need Offering
- 8 Conference Calendar
Tips on Being Good Stewards of the Earth

Power Choices

by Charles C. Buck, Conference Minister

Money has power, although it's an ambiguous power.

For example, the apostle Paul told his protégé, Timothy, that "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil" (1 Timothy 6:10). Jesus sounded a similar warning in his Sermon on the Mount: "No one can serve two masters...you cannot serve God and wealth" (Matthew 6:24).



But neither would outright condemn money. To Timothy, Paul continued and said that the rich should put trust not in their riches but in God, and instead be "rich in good works, generous, and ready to share" (1 Timothy 6:18). And Jesus spoke similarly of the responsibility to do good by those who have much: "From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required, and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded" (Luke 12:48).

So the power of money can lead us to do bad or evil things, just as it can enable us to do good and noble deeds. The difference, as Paul and Jesus imply, lies in the choice made by its owner. If money has power, then the owner, says a popular financial adviser, is the *power source*.

You alone are the power source. You are the one who makes the choices to spend money, to save money, to borrow money. That's why I say money is such an amazing teacher: What you choose to do with your money shows whether you are truly powerful or powerless (Suze Orman, *O, The Oprah Magazine*, September 2009).

In other words, we choose whether money becomes a power *over* us and render us powerless, or a power *for* us to enable powerful things to happen in people's lives throughout the world. In this way, money is like fire. Unchecked and uncontrolled, it can overwhelm and destroy us. But carefully managed and tended, it offers light, warmth and life for all.

Harnessing the power of money means releasing it, and that is where our tithes, offering and contributions come in. One real and important way we do that in the United Church of Christ is through Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM).

This annual OCWM edition of *The Friend* highlights examples of God's power unleashed when we choose to give. More significantly, these stories refute any claim that the church is in decline and has lost its power. As long as people like us continue to let go of the riches that God gives us, there will always be God's power making an impact on people's lives. It just depends on what we choose.

Stewardship: More than Money

by Donald Schmidt,
Associate Conference Minister

When we hear the word "stewardship," our minds can turn to money, specifically the money we give to church. But stewardship is far, far more.

Stewardship begins with recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God. That simple recognition changes everything we understand about stewardship.



If something is God's, then how we treat it reveals our feelings toward God. Think of borrowing something of great value from a friend. Probably you would treat it with the utmost care. The same is true for what we have received from God: we should want to care for it.

In the creation stories of Genesis, humans are charged to care for the earth. The Hebrew phrase for "till the soil" connotes a sense of taking great care. We are not told that we can take all we can from the earth without thinking of the cost. Rather, we are to treat it gently, nurture it, and do all we can to ensure that it will provide for future generations. After all, had people not done that for us, we wouldn't be here!

In a similar way, stewardship calls us to evaluate how we spend our money. Do we think only of ourselves when we shop and thus look for the lowest price no matter what, or do we dare to think about the consequences of our decisions? For example, buying local produce may cost a little more, but it supports an important industry here in Hawai'i, sustains jobs, and encourages our economy. By paying a little more, we can make a difference in other people's lives.

And, of course, knowing that everything comes from God reminds us that we should set aside a portion of what we receive—such as money, goods, time—and give it to God. The best way to do this is through our church, where we know that it is doing work we cannot do alone. Supporting the operations of the church (both our local congregations and the wider church) helps ensure that the message of God's love is proclaimed to all in word and in deed.

Stewardship is more than just the offering plate. It's a way of life.



God is still speaking

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

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

Fax: (808) 521-7196

E-mail: dweible@hcucc.org Diane Weible
leehenrychang@hcucc.org Lee Henry-Chang
sdavis@hcucc.org Scott Davis

Stewardship Team Offers Resources, Holds Contest

To help churches understand Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM), the Stewardship Missional Team has introduced a collection of resources. The Team has also announced two contests to help promote OCWM.

At the recent 'Aha Pae'aina, a list of stewardship resources was distributed, including interpretive material on OCWM and Bible studies on stewardship. One of the Bible studies was shared during the 'Aha Makua to very positive response. Links to all of these resources are available at www.hcucc.org.

Later this fall, churches will receive a CD that includes all of these stewardship resources, along with an update of the OCWM video produced by the Hawai'i Conference and audio files for the 'Aha Pae'aina presentations by keynote speaker Rita Nakashima Brock.

Two contests introduced by the Stewardship Team encourage creativity in helping to explain OCWM. The first contest is a search for a mascot, a character to help people remember what OCWM is.

The other contest invites churches to submit pictures, videos, or other media that show Our Church's Wider Mission being promoted within the congregation. Maybe you shared a skit or song, or invited testimonies; maybe the youth hosted a car wash or a committee created an activity or game to raise money for OCWM. Whatever you did, record it and send it in!

Entries can be submitted to Donald Schmidt via email at dschmidt@hcucc.org or by mail to Hawai'i Conference UCC, 1848 Nu'uauu Ave., Honolulu, HI 96817.

UCC Youth Gather in Seattle

Nineteen youth and ten adults from Hawai'i joined almost three hundred other youth from United Church of Christ churches across the western portion of the U.S. for this year's Western Regional Youth Event.



The Hawai'i delegation poses for a photo.

The event, held at Seattle University, included a musical concert by the group "Lost and Found," a presentation by motivational speaker Hoan Do, workshops, service projects and an opportunity to explore the city.

Hawai'i youth shined as they led worship on Wednesday morning, the last day of the event, including the sharing of music and messages. Visit the Conference website (www.hcucc.org) for photos of the youth in action.

(Hawai'i's First Church, continued from page 1)

came to Hawai'i. One way this will be done is by offering the church grounds to this year's Ironman World Championship competition to be held in October. Organizations will be invited to set up tents and tables on the church grounds, which is near the finish line, so that people stopping by can hear church members share the story.

Other events include the annual Christmas Eve program and fundraising dinners. The biggest event being planned is the 195th anniversary celebration, which will take place on April 11, 2015. David's hope is that churches and groups from throughout the island and churches from neighbor islands will participate in this day-long event that will end with a special lu'au.

The church was founded in 1820, the year the first missionaries arrived in Hawai'i. Construction on the building began in 1835



Pastor David de Carvalho gathers with other church and community leaders in June to announce the church's designation as one of America's Eleven Most Endangered Places.

with the blessing of King Kamehameha and was completed in 1837. Its walls were built from stones taken from a nearby heiau and its beams from ohia wood cut from the slopes of Hualalai. In 1978 the church was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

The goal of the reconstruction project is to complete the renovations by 2020, the 200th anniversary of the church. David said there is a sense of urgency to the project because if the repairs are not done soon, it may be too late to save the historic building. The national attention received by the National Trust for Historic Preservation will help the church meet its goal.

"This is a great undertaking and will require great support and financial resources to accomplish," said David. "The response from the community has been fantastic, lots of people willing and wanting to help in various capacities."

Members of the construction crew from the 200th (and final) episode of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" have volunteered their time to help with the work that needs to be done. In addition, said David, every week a different person comes to the church and wants to donate services or money toward the project.

Faces around the Conference

The Friend

‘Aha Pae‘aina Brings the Hawai‘i Conference Together to Learn and to Share



South African Theologian Inspires Hope

At several recent gatherings around the islands, Allan Boesak, currently the Desmond Tutu Chair of Peace, Global Justice and Reconciliation Studies at Butler University and Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, inspired and challenged audiences to a deeper understanding of hope.

Sharing stories and conversations from both South Africa and the United States, Allan emphasized that there is a danger for people, from politicians to pastors, to speak of hope too easily. "We speak of hope as if we can just switch on a light and anyone who doesn't get it is not with Jesus, not with the program."

Allan, who was the keynote speaker at the 'Aha Pae'aina in 2013, was invited to return by the Hawai'i Conference and speak about the subject of his latest book, *Dare We Speak of Hope?* The book poses these questions: What happens when we have this hopeful thing called reconciliation and we discover it is all a word and we end up with what has become cheap reconciliation? Do we become cynical? Turn our backs on reconciliation?



To each of his audiences on Kaua'i, O'ahu, Maui and Hawai'i Island, his emphatic answer was "No, because the hope we have in Jesus Christ does not disappoint." However, hope can only result when we see the "woundedness of others."

St. Augustine of Hippo, he said, spoke of hope in terms of a woman or mother who has two daughters—one called Anger and the other Courage. Anger sees the suffering of another and does not walk away but becomes angry. Courage then acts to heal the brokenness in that other person.

"The daughters together, that's hope," said Allan. "And it puts all of this world-changing in the hands of two girl children. We can't speak of hope unless we speak of peace; we can't speak of hope unless we speak of faith."

In addition to his public presentations, Allan led workshops on the Bible and biblical interpretation for clergy on O'ahu, Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island. Biblical interpretation, he said, has to do with the way we witness in our world. His experiences during apartheid provided rich fodder for understanding the stories in the Bible. He offered the example of slavery in the Bible, which had been used by whites to justify the system of apartheid.

"If this book is the justification for slavery, you can take it and throw it in the heart of the sea," he said. "I cannot pray to a God who says it is my will that your people be treated this way, be dispossessed."

He found, instead, another way of understanding the Bible. "That for me has become a life-long quest," he said. "The discovery of a different message that the Bible brings was a moment of great liberation for me."

Allan spoke of a time he was imprisoned and placed in isolation. He was not given any books, newspaper, or radio. But he asked the guard for a Bible. He said within an hour the guard brought him a Bible, believing that if he read his Bible he would learn to be submissive and obedient to the government.

"I looked up and thanked God for stupidity, for the Bible is the most dangerous thing," said Allan. "No matter what they do to you in the interrogation room, when you come back and read 'Nothing can separate us from the love of God,' anything is bearable. It took the South African government a long time to realize how subversive this book is and what a mistake it was to give this book to the natives."

He also told the clergy gathered that prophetic preaching is not just about having eloquent words, but following those words with symbolic acts. "What you say on Sunday you have to be prepared to make come to life on Monday," said Allan.

(‘Aha Pae’aina, continued from page 1)

(The woven piece is on display at the Conference Office.) And on Friday night, twelve O'ahu churches united to present "Taste of O'ahu," featuring delicious local and ethnic foods.

In the business session, delegates considered a bylaws amendment to permit annual reviews of Conference books instead of an audit. After considerable discussion and a failed attempt to add a requirement of an audit at least every five years, the amendment failed to garner the required two-thirds vote for passage.

Delegates also approved a budget for the new fiscal year and elected new members of the Conference Council, including the new Chair of the Council: Iese Tuuao, Pastor of the Samoan Church of Hawai'i, LMS Nanakuli. (To see the complete list of those elected, go to www.hcucc.org.)

Special offerings received at the 'Aha Pae'aina included \$1,217 for the Vesper Maile Ito Fund and \$1,554 to benefit Our Church's Wider Mission.

For more 'Aha Pae'aina highlights, including photos, video of Rita Nakashima Brock's address, and audio recordings of workshops, visit www.hcucc.org.

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 96817.

News briefs are adapted from articles 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.

United Church Funds Announces Fossil Fuel-Free Investment Fund

by Emily Schappacher

United Church Funds has announced a new fossil fuel-free investment fund. Targeted to open for investment on Oct. 1, 2014, Beyond Fossil Fuels Fund is a domestic core equity fund free of investments in U.S. companies extracting or producing fossil fuels.

"Our staff has worked hard this year since General Synod to identify appropriate investment options and managers for this fund," said Donald G. Hart, President of UCF. "Our final manager selection will be based on total investment commitments from current and new investors."

At General Synod last year in Long Beach, California, the UCC became the first mainline religious denomination to vote to move toward divestment from fossil fuel companies as one strategy to combat climate change. The resolution called for enhanced shareholder engagement in fossil fuel companies, an intensive search for fossil fuel-free investment vehicles, and the identification of "best in class" fossil fuel companies by the next General Synod taking place June 26-30, 2015.

"As stewards of God's creation, we must continue to grow in our commitment to initiatives like this if we are to have a sustainable future on earth," said Geoffrey Black, UCC General Minister and President. "The United Church of Christ's support of this fund will make it possible for others to follow."

Conferences Push for Mid-East Peace through Divestment

by Anthony Moujaes

In the faith community, there is a growing movement to use divestment and economic leverage as a way to push for peace in the Middle East. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is ready



to dump its shares from select companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, and the World Council of Churches is encouraging member churches to open a dialogue with Israeli and Palestinian supporters.

In the United Church of Christ's work for peace in Palestine-Israel, several conferences have laid the groundwork by calling for divestment through a series of resolutions. The Central Atlantic Conference at its annual meeting on June 14 became the latest conference to move to use economic leverage as a tool to end conflict in the Middle East. That followed a resolution by the New York Conference passed two weeks earlier.

Both measures are almost identical, calling on UCC members and numerous settings of the church to divest from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and to boycott goods produced by Israeli companies in the Occupied Territories. The resolutions ask church leadership to continue pressing Congress to ensure that aid to Israel complies with U.S. laws, and to affirm a commitment by the church to engage in interfaith dialogue among the three Abrahamic faiths—with emphasis on congregation-to-congregation interaction and conversations.

Both resolutions will be forwarded for consideration by General Synod 30, scheduled for June 26-30, 2015, in Cleveland.

Following Global Ecumenical Gathering UCC Leaders Look to Sow Seeds of Pilgrimage

by Anthony Moujaes

After a recent meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), Geoffrey Black, UCC General Minister and President, and Karen Georgia Thompson, UCC Ecumenical Officer, are hoping to get the wider church to join them on a pilgrimage of justice and peace.

"As we look to General Synod next year, our theme is Unexpected Places, and a pilgrimage takes you to unexpected places, so we're looking at General Synod as a place to bring back the things from WCC," said Thompson. "The other thing is how we might push these ideas into other meetings in the church, not just General Synod."

The Central Committee, the governing body of the 350-member communion of churches world-wide, spent its time looking at ways to deepen the understanding among churches of a common pilgrimage, Thompson explained, and ways in which committee members can communicate that common pilgrimage as they return to their respective churches.

During the seven-day session, the Central Committee also reviewed WCC programs and plans for the next three years and participated in a series of plenaries that lifted up unity through solidarity on key global issues such as churches in conflict, climate change, economic justice and churches sharing resources.

"The journey is ongoing. One of the challenges in our time there, people are saying, is 'Where are we journeying to?' People want a defined destination," Thompson said. "There's an element of mystery to the journey, so we take it on knowing it will take time to get where we are going, and that there are unexpected places we find along the way."

Justice and Witness Team Creates Resource Library

The Justice and Witness Missional Team of the Hawai'i Conference is creating a library of worship resources to help churches observe special Sundays in the United Church of Christ calendar.



Resources currently posted on the website at www.hcucc.org include Kalaupapa Sunday (January), Holocaust Sunday (April), and Rural Life Sunday (May). Additional resources are being developed and will be posted as soon as they are available. Once posted, a

notice will go out in the *Coconut Wireless* e-mail newsletter alerting churches to the upcoming Sunday and the availability of worship helps. (To receive the *Coconut Wireless*, send an e-mail to coconutwireless@hcucc.org.)

The Team is also working on a number of justice issues and will be sending out information to keep churches informed and invite members to participate in acts of witness.

resource List

NIN Offering Supports Justice Work

Neighbors In Need (NIN) is a special mission offering supporting works of justice and compassion throughout the United States and abroad.

Received by most churches on World Communion Sunday each year, one-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) and two-thirds support justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants up to \$3,000.

Last year, NIN grants enabled sixty-seven churches and organizations to address pressing issues such as climate change, hunger, teen pregnancy, unemployment, and homelessness, as well as to promote ministries of fair trade, education, disaster response and preparedness, community organizing, and much more.

World Communion Sunday this year is October 5, but churches may receive the offering any Sunday. NIN contributions can be made online at any time by visiting www.ucc.org/nin/.

The deadline for grant applications is March 31 and September 30 of each year.



Highlights from the Website

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

Services of Installation, Recognition Held

The Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches held a Service of Recognition for **Charlene Taketa** as Licensed Minister of Lanakila Congregational Church (Hawai'i Island) on Saturday, June 28.

Michael Christensen was installed as Pastor of Hanapepe United Church of Christ (Kaua'i) on Sunday, June 22.

Alan Akana was installed as Pastor of Koloa Union Church (Kaua'i) on Sunday, July 27.

Pastoral Changes

David Rivers began as Senior Minister of Central Union Church on June 10. He most recently served as Senior Minister of First Christian Church in Lawrence, Kansas.

Kyle Lovett and Church of the Crossroads, through mutual agreement, parted company as pastor and congregation. Her last Sunday was July 13.

Deborah Whisnand resigned as Executive Director of Pacific Health Ministry effective July 11. She will be moving to Texas to be closer to family.

In Memory

Robert Alpers

Retired minister Bob Alpers died May 31 at the age of 79 in North Carolina. Ordained in 1958, the Rev. Alpers served churches in South Dakota, Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska before retiring as co-pastor of Lana'i Union Church.



Charles Scheutz

Retired minister Charles (Chuck) Schuetz died June 24 at the age of 92 in California. The Rev. Schuetz was ordained in 1967 and was minister of Kailua Christian Church until the early 1970s.



Sadaichi Asai

Pastor Emeritus Sadaichi Asai died July 4 at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California, at the age of 99. The Rev. Asai was ordained in 1948 and served churches in Vermont, Kansas and Hawai'i, including Kahului Union Church, from which he retired in 1976.





HAWAII
CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

1848 Nuʻuanu Avenue * Honolulu, Hawaiʻi 96817

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

Return Service Requested



August 2014

OCWM *Changes Lives*

Conference Calendar of Events

August 2	Conference Council
August 9	AHEC Board of Directors
August 15	Admissions Day Holiday (Office Closed)
August 16	State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches Board Meeting
September 1	Labor Day Holiday (Office Closed)
September 13	Tri-Isle 'Aha Makua
October 5-8	Fall Youth Camp
October 17-18	AHEC 'Aha Halawai
October 18	O'ahu 'Aha Moku-puni
October 25	Hawai'i Island 'Aha Moku-puni
November 1	Conference Council
November 2	Kaua'i 'Aha Moku-puni

Tips on Being Good Stewards of the Earth

To be good stewards of what God has given us may mean making some changes in our lives. Check out these tips and find more like them at www.hcucc.org.

- Reduce your junk mail. Visit sites such as www.greendimes.com to learn how to remove your name from direct marketing lists. Doing this can save 16 hours of junk mail sorting and 1.5 trees per year.
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs. They last ten times longer than incandescent bulbs and use about 70% less electricity. One compact fluorescent saves about 600 pounds of coal.
- Curb impulse shopping. Only buy what you need.
- Purchase a toilet dam. It only costs about \$10 and saves 40% water per flush.
- Use cloth bags. Avoiding paper bags can save one 15-year-old tree annually, and avoiding plastic bags saves oil.
- Compost all organic waste. You can reduce by 25% what you send to a landfill.