



# HAWAII CONFERENCE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

November 2, 2016

Dear Hawai'i Conference Members and Friends:

In less than a week's time, we will make some very important decisions for our nation, our state and our communities. We will elect leaders and representatives, and vote on issues that will affect the way we function in government and as a society.

As you probably have already been doing, we hope you will continue to encourage your church members and friends to exercise their right to vote at polling places next Tuesday or to send or walk in absentee ballots. In Hawai'i, it is not unusual for races and initiatives to be decided by slim margins. So, as the saying goes, every vote counts!

At the same time, we encourage you to offer a pastoral word of hope and assurance. In this last election season, we have witnessed a level of acrimony and discord among candidates and their supporters that have been unmatched in recent times. Healthy debate has been pushed aside by loud and vicious personal attacks. And threats that the electoral process is rigged, by foreign powers no less, and that outcomes will be contested both in courtrooms and on the streets have raised anxiety levels and aroused fear and foreboding for the future of our nation.

In our communities, we may find a mixture of emotions in response to the elections. Some may react with strong anger and deep frustration, others with grief and depression. Such reactions have occurred in prior elections, and they are probably even more likely in this one.

So as God's people we can offer a much needed word of hope and assurance to those inside and outside our churches.

Regardless of next Tuesday's outcome, let us first and always keep our trust in God, who is sovereign over creation and the world. "For God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19: 26).

Let us also pray for our elected leaders, at all levels of government, that they may be guided to serve the common good with integrity and fairness, and with peace and justice.

Finally, let us pledge to do our part in this world by doing good, making right and showing love. "Perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4: 18). If we believe, speak and act in God's love, we shall overcome all fear and inspire courage to create a bright and glorious future!

May God bless us all and be with us always,

Charles Buck, Conference Minister

Richard Kamanu, Associate Conference Minister

Kenneth Makuakane, Papa Makua and Associate Conference Minister

Sarah Jones, Associate Conference Minister