

HAWAII CONFERENCE  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



# The Friend

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ONE 'OHANA

UNIFIED • RADIANT • TRANSFORMING

# Mālama I Ka 'Āina

These islands are home to some of the most unique forms of life and natural beauty on this earth. But sadly, Hawai'i is not immune to the devastating impacts of climate change, invasive species, and environmental pollution. So, whose responsibility is it to act?

“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

The theme for this issue is *Mālama I Ka 'Āina*, “to respect and care for the land.” We are called to be good stewards of the gifts God has given to us. And as those who call Hawai'i home, we have a responsibility to *mālama i ka 'āina*.

Our cover photo of an adult 'iwi feeding a chick was taken by Ellen



C. Ramio, Hosmer's Grove, Maui, on April 17, 2022, and is used by permission.

We hope you enjoy this issue!



## We Are All Noah Now

JONATHAN C. ROACH, ASSOCIATE CONFERENCE MINISTER

We are all Noah now! I am not the first person to proclaim this. The first time I saw it was in the *New York Times* in 2016.<sup>i</sup> But from the first time that I read it, it resonated with my soul. I knew this was a prophetic challenge.

The story of Noah is a foundational narrative of our faith, a deep religious truth that calls us to the divine mandate to protect, to preserve, and to love the Earth and all of creation. I agree with Rabbi Shoshana Friedman who argues, “there is no portion of the Torah more tragically relevant to our generation than Noah.”<sup>iii</sup>

Here in our beloved islands, we live in the extinction capital of the world. We have lost more species, from birds to snails to plants, than any other comparable geographical area in the world. Just last summer, the U.S. government declared eight species of birds and one species of plant that lived here in Hawai'i and nowhere else in the entire world extinct. The list of Hawai'i species lost forever include the Kaua'i 'ākialoa, Kaua'i nukupu'u, Kaua'i 'ō'ō,



PHOTO BY ERIC ANDERSON

the large Kaua'i kāma'ō, Maui 'akepa, Maui nukupu'u, Moloka'i creeper, Po'ouli, and *Phyllostegia glabra* var. *lanaiensis*. This is heartbreaking. These are our failures. They represent how we have failed God and neighbor. How we have failed to keep the divine mandate to save and to protect our fellow species. How we have failed to be Noah.

But the good news is that there is still so much to save and to protect. We have more opportunities to be Noah. I believe it is our kuleana to step up to the challenge of loving God and neighbor by protecting our native species. In the early part of the 20th century, the skies of the lowlands of Hawai'i were empty and local hui manu societies were formed to bring birds back to the lowlands. Unfortunately, their plans, which introduced many of our common species like the mejiro, cardinals, and yellow-fronted canaries into our islands, caused more rips in the fabric of creation than it healed. Fortunately, we now have a better understanding as well as new technologies and approaches to empower us to save and to protect our native forest birds. And there is good news for our native birds, too; last summer the first endangered 'ua'u was observed on Maunakea since 1954.

Being a Noah requires us to transform our attitudes and behaviors. Years

ago, I stopped believing that I owned two acres of Hawai'i Island and started understanding that I had two acres of precious 'āina entrusted into my care for a blink in the eye of history. I am entrusted with this sacred 'āina by those who cared for it before I was born, I share this 'āina with other species who need my help, and I hold this sacred trust for future generations of both human beings and other life forms who will need this 'āina to thrive. This understanding shapes how I need to act.

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### God is still speaking

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# What Do We Say About the Red Hill Crisis?

“While we understand the importance of national security and the role of the military in Hawai‘i, the Navy must demonstrate its stewardship of the land and water that have been entrusted to its use. If Hawai‘i is to continue to be a strategic geographical location for the military, the Navy must take a hard look at how it treats Hawai‘i as an asset.”—**Ernie Lau**, Chief Engineer and Manager of the Board of Water Supply, “O‘ahu’s future water supply requires everyone’s cooperation,” *Community Voice, Civil Beat*, December 28, 2021.

“Parents are bathing their children with bottles of water—for months now. [Families] are still suffering. [The military is] still only giving two cases of water per family per day per household. They use that to take a shower, cook, and drink. . . And that’s why getting the fuel out of Red Hill is a priority.”—**Danny Tengan** was one of four panelists in a webinar titled “US Military and Environmental Justice” hosted by the UCC on March 10.



“God gave us stewardship over a creation that took six God-days to mastermind, implement, and didn’t stop until “God saw that it was good.” I don’t believe God would vest something so sacred to just anybody. Therefore, if everything is sacred, then there is the sacred and the desecrated.

Our job as a faith community is to remind others. . . It is our kuleana to not just stand, but to act upon our beliefs.”—**Kenneth Makuakāne**, Pastor, Kawaiaha‘o Church

On the island of O‘ahu, between the ahupua‘a (land divisions) of Hālawā and Moanalua, is Kapūkakī (also known as “Red Hill”)—a mountain ridge that was mined in the 1940s to store fuel for U.S. military operations. It is the site of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility which consists of 20 towering tanks that can collectively store up to 250 million gallons of fuel. This facility sits just 100 feet above an aquifer that provides water for approximately 400,000 O‘ahu residents from Hālawā to Hawai‘i Kai and has a history of leaks and mismanagement. Nearly 200,000 gallons of fuel have leaked from these tanks since their commissioning.

For years, people warned of the contamination threat posed by this facility. In November 2021, after a 14,000-gallon leak, residents in the area reported health problems after consuming tap water which appeared to be tainted. The Department of Health confirmed high levels of petroleum in the Navy’s Red Hill shaft. When the fuel reached the water supply and news broke out, community organizing efforts and actions ramped up. More voices began calling, “Shut Down Red Hill!”

After various attempts were made to cut off the contamination source, the U.S. Department of Defense finally released a statement on March 7, 2022 announcing the decision to defuel and permanently close the facility. Those who have been closely following the issue celebrate this victory and remind the community that the fight for clean water and remediation must continue until the fuel is safely removed and the facility is decommissioned for good.



“You can read [about] it in the papers and the news, but until you really talk to these families, you don’t know the heartaches they go through.”—**Danny Tengan**, HCUCC Disaster Ministries Coordinator, has been volunteering to distribute water to residents who can no longer access clean water in their homes.

“Much work remains to be done to address the Red Hill crisis, including: demanding a concrete commitment for the timely defueling of the facility; full transparency for all information relating to the integrity of the facility and the safety of our aquifer; continued accountability for all affected families and for the measures necessary to pull us out of the crisis (including compensation for the new water sources that may need to be developed); and remediation of the environment and the aquifer underlying Red Hill to the extent possible. We must also all do our part to let others know about the ongoing crisis, and why water conservation must be something we need to be mindful of now more than ever before.”—**Wayne Tanaka**, Sierra Club of Hawai‘i, April 19, 2022

“As stewards of creation, we are called to protect our sacred, fragile ʻāina (land) and wai (water). As doers of justice, we are called to resist this environmental threat to the well-being of our brothers and sisters.—**HCUCC Justice and Witness Missional Team**, “Statement Supporting the Draining and Shut Down of the Navy’s Fuel Storage Tanks at Kapūkakī (Red Hill),” January 12, 2022

## Land and Indigenous Wisdom

DAVID K. POPHAM, CONFERENCE MINISTER

We cannot think about ‘āina or land without thinking of the population attached to the land: animals, people, and even vegetation. When I was in college, family farms were in crisis. My grandfather and uncle were among those who experienced significant disruption to their farm. Without extended family stepping in, the farm would have been completely lost. As it was, the house, barns, and surrounding fields were saved. But the hillside with timber and our family graves were lost.

In some cases, those who knew the land—the turn of its seasons, the movement of its animals—were removed. In their place came big agribusiness with GMO seeds, chemical pesticides, and people making decisions in large cities far away from the farm and its natural rhythm. I learned then the valuable lesson of working to keep people and lands together.

That was the early 1980s. Here in 2022 the Hawai‘i Conference has been gifted an opportunity to be a partner in keeping Micronesians and Pacific Islanders with their land. Recently the Paul T. and Minnie E. Diefenderfer Fund was transferred to the Hawai‘i Conference Foundation for use by the Hawai‘i Conference Council in partnering with Micronesian and Pan-Pacific entities to help educate Pacific Island ministers while facilitating their ability to remain on their home islands.

The commitment extends the want of the couple for whom the fund is named. As a young man, Paul Diefenderfer was utilized by President Hoover to help in the transferring of American Samoa from military rule to a democratic

government as desired by the Samoan population. Paul not only ably assisted in the transition but was also asked to assist in the writing of the constitution.

In 1973 Paul and Minnie became Mission Interpreters for the United Church Board for World Ministries, now Wider Church Ministries. In this capacity the couple traveled to mission locations throughout the Pacific and other regions. By the end of their time, they traveled over 1.5 million miles meeting with mission personnel and Christians



Paul and Minnie Diefenderfer

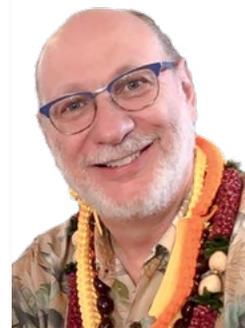
in 53 countries. After each trip the couple would return home to southeast Pennsylvania and interpret their experiences to UCC congregations throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region. The Diefenderfers' home became a resting place of artifacts, archives, and memorabilia which later found its way to the Reading Public Museum in Pennsylvania, the Samoan Museum in Pago Pago, and the Bishop Museum in Honolulu.

The Diefenderfers also set up the

Paul T. and Minnie E. Diefenderfer Mission Endowment Revocable Trust in 1996

to further advance the work of Christianity in the Pacific among Micronesian and Polynesian Islands. Both Paul and Minnie have since passed away. In looking at how to continue the use of the Fund, the Pennsylvania Trustees were in touch with the Hawai‘i Conference Office throughout last year. The Fund is now transferred and beginning this Fall for calendar year 2023 we will be able to use the money for mission purposes among Micronesian and Pacific Islanders. In the initial agreement, half the interest will be used to support the Pacific Theological College in Fiji and the other half used to support ministerial training in the Micronesian islands.

I find myself thankful for the relationship and the vision of Paul and Minnie Diefenderfer, for we come to know God only through the things of this world – the Bible, nature, our relationships with one another. Our first teacher of God is our childhood home: mom and dad and the wider community as well as location and place. Our theology is always tied to our experience of creation, be that in an urban setting or a rural setting. The ability to assist in training ministers amid the landscape and culture of their childhood is the gift of intuitive wisdom. May God, who blessed Paul and Minnie with this vision, continue to bless those who are encompassed in this gift of aloha.



Information on Paul T. and Minnie E. Diefenderfer comes from the unpublished paper, *Extra Mile Leads to New Chair*, 1989, by Paul Hetrich.

Kīpuka Punahoa

# Conservation of the Upper Punahoa Lands

ANDREW BUNN, HCF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Upon his death in 1882, Rev. Titus Coan left approximately 1,900 acres in the ahupua'a of Punahoa, to the west of Hilo, as a means to support of the mission work of the Hawai'i Conference. These were lands Rev. Coan received from Kamehameha III in 1855. This land, described by Rev. Coan as a "woodland and pasture lot," stretches up the slope between Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa for a distance of almost nine miles and rises in elevation about 2,700 feet. Today it consists of several subdivided parcels. The lower slope parcels of land are zoned for agricultural use and for many years were the site of a dairy operation known as Excelsior Dairy. The upper slope parcels, which consist of the vast majority of the acreage, are conservation lands and contain rich and beautiful native forest which has been the focus of recent conservation efforts to protect the native forest, wildlife habitat, open space, watershed, and valuable opportunities for scientific research, education, and outreach.

In 2014, the Hawai'i Conference Foundation entered into an agreement with The Nature Conservancy to preserve a large portion of these lands in perpetuity. Approximately 900 acres are subject to a "conservation easement," under which The Nature Conservancy has committed to active management and protection of the land, including "preserving and protecting the Conservation Values,

connecting people of east Hawai'i to their natural, spiritual, and cultural heritage through learning about our native forest, identifying, preserving, protecting, enhancing and restoring the natural ecological values of the Property, including the elimination of threats to the natural ecological values, and the preservation, protection and enhancement of the Property as a habitat for native Hawaiian birds, significant native plant communities and plant and animal species located within the Property."

The majority of the conservation easement area is a mix of 'ōhi'a, koa, lava and uluhe ferns, representing "an early successional native plant community" established on a lava flow from Mauna Loa that occurred in 1881. The 1881 flow completely surrounds a 200-acre elevated area (a kīpuka) upon which the native forest is considered to be between 400 and 700 years old. According to a recent report of The Nature Conservancy:

"The kīpuka's terrain is rugged and wet and muddy. Portions of the area are pristine and densely forested, although invasive weeds have invaded areas of the main kīpuka over the past decade. The ground is blanketed by native mosses and ferns.... [A] perennial stream[which] continues to flow as one of the only streams on the entire windward slope of Mauna Loa. Along the banks of this stream is a grove of native loulou palms (*Pritchardia beccariana*) and oha wai

(*Clermontia parviflora*), which have large, curved flowers favored as a source of nectar for native honeycreepers. The surrounding forest contains

koa, 'ōhi'a lehua trees, giant hāpu'u and other native plants such as 'ōlapa, 'uki'uki, alani, 'ie'ie, kōlea, 'ala'ala wai nui, kanawao, and 'ākala. The area is habitat for native birds such as 'ōma'ō, 'elepaio, and 'amakihi."

In making the grant to The Nature Conservancy, the Foundation also received a modest grant of funds from The Nature Conservancy which have been invested and continue to provide some recurring income to support the mission of the Conference, and the land may still be used by the Foundation to support the Conference's mission so long as the conservation values are preserved. As we look into the future, the Foundation continues in dialogue with The Nature Conservancy as well as the Pu'a Foundation, which owns an adjoining parcel of land, about the stewardship of this property. Discussions focus on preservation efforts, including combating invasive species and abating the Rapid Ohia Death fungus, and exploring opportunities for educational and cultural opportunities that lie within.



# Prayers of Aloha

Join us as we pray for and with each of the 118 churches that make up the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ. We invite all of our churches to take part in this prayer cycle throughout the year as a way to live aloha and strengthen our connections as one 'ohana: a unified, radiant, and transforming expression of the body of Christ.

Each week, a list of churches will be shared in the *Coconut Wireless* and on our website. We encourage you to

learn about the congregations, to find their websites or social media accounts, to learn the names of their kahu and leadership, and lift up their names in your prayers. Pray for these churches in whatever way you are moved.

These are the churches we have been praying for in March and April:



Church of the Pacific (Kaua'i)



Waikoloa Marshallese Ministry (Hawai'i Island)



Waialua Congregational Church (Moloka'i)



Waianae Samoan Church (O'ahu)



Koolau Hui'ia Protestant Church (Kaua'i)

**PHOTOS NOT AVAILABLE**  
Church of the New Testament (O'ahu)  
Kosrae Honolulu Congregational Church (O'ahu)  
Chuukese Congregational Church (O'ahu)  
Crystal of Salvation Church (O'ahu)  
Epenesa Fou Congregational Christian Samoan Church of Hawai'i (O'ahu)  
Kokokahi UCC (O'ahu)



Community Church of Honolulu (O'ahu)



United Community Church (Hawai'i Island)



Cup of Freedom UCC (O'ahu)



Wahiawa UCC (O'ahu)



Waiialua United Church of Christ (O'ahu)



Kōloa Union Church (Kaua'i)



Waihee Protestant Church (Maui)



# Mission Offering: Strengthen the Church

Strengthen the Church (STC), one of four special mission offerings of the United Church of Christ, builds up the Body of Christ. Split evenly between the Hawai'i Conference and UCC national ministries, money received from this offering largely supports youth ministries, leadership development for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC voice has not been heard, and innovation in existing congregations.

Churches are invited to receive this offering on Pentecost Sunday, June 5, 2022, but contributions may be collected on any Sunday.

Resources for promoting Strengthen the Church are available at [uccresources.com](http://uccresources.com).

## In Memory

**Stephen Hanashiro**, 86, retired ordained minister in the UCC and member of Windward United Church of Christ, died on January 26, 2022, at St. Francis Hospice. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Pacific School of Religion in 1963. Steve served in a variety of roles and settings, including as a pastor of Hilo Coast UCC on Hawai'i Island and Waikeola Congregational Church in Honolulu, Associate Pastor of UCC – Judd Street in Honolulu, a U.S. Army Chaplain, a Campus Minister at the University of Hawai'i Manoa, and a social worker. He is survived by his wife, Verna, and their adult children and grandchildren.



# Some Tips for Great Listening

ELIZABETH KENT, MEETING EXPECTATIONS HAWAII

For more than 25 years, Elizabeth Kent has worked as a mediator, facilitator, and trainer in conflict resolution. She enjoys helping people and institutions find solutions to challenging problems.



“Thanks for being such a great listener. This family situation is so difficult for me and I feel like a burden was lifted off my shoulders.” It feels good to know you helped someone you care about.<sup>1</sup>

Not all conversations are the same. Good listeners will distinguish between a “usual” conversation and one that calls for deeper listening and full focus on the speaker.

Speakers and listeners share reciprocally in many “usual” conversations. Perhaps there is a discussion about weekend plans, movies, places to go, dinners out, good company, and football. All participants share and receive information.



ELIZABETH KENT

Other conversations start when someone brings up something that is bothering them. This calls for a different kind of listening. Here are some of the techniques that mediators use in these situations:

## Focus completely on the speaker.

Body language often communicates more than words. People notice if and how intently you listen and look for genuine concern. Some ways to show caring are by sitting so you are facing each other, keeping appropriate eye contact, leaning forward, and nodding. Facial expressions also convey interest. Eliminate distractions such as turning off your cell phone to focus on the speaker. People are generally sensitive to tone of voice so you may want to concentrate on keeping a neutral tone.

**Avoid putting yourself into the story.** Often people judge the speaker or others mentioned in the story – stay neutral. Try to keep from offering unasked for advice (this is extremely difficult to do – it seems to be part of human nature to want to problem solve). Often people want to “bond” by sharing their similar difficult experience, but that takes the focus away from the speaker. Remember, your job is to listen to the speaker.

**Try to figure out what concerns the speaker, then confirm your understanding.** Use neutral, open-ended

statements or questions to find out more information.

Examples may start with “Please say more about . . .” or “Help me understand your feelings about . . .”

Generally, the speaker will talk about what happened and the speaker’s emotions because of the problem. Mediators find it helpful to respond by rephrasing and summarizing both emotions and the content the speaker shared. For example, “You feel disrespected because. . .” or “They betrayed your trust when. . .” The speaker can then tell you if you heard correctly or missed the point. One tip: use your own words to summarize and don’t “parrot” the speaker’s words.

Because these are different kinds of conversation than we generally have daily, they may feel uncomfortable and seem awkward to talk in a different kind of way. Remember that what feels difficult at first becomes natural with practice and refinement.

<sup>1</sup>This short article focuses on people sharing a problem that does not involve the listener. How to respond when receiving criticism will be the focus of a future short article.

... *We Are All Noah Now*, continued from page 2

There is so much we can do. We can plant native species, prevent plastic waste from entering our ecosystem, and control the destructive spread of mosquitoes and little fire ants. For more ideas see the websites of great local organizations like the

‘Alalā Project, the Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project, or the Kohala Center (and there are so many more!).

As Noah Gomes recently wrote in *Ka Wai Ola*, “may our silent forest sing again.”<sup>iii</sup> Whether your rallying cry is “*aloha ‘āina*” or “save the whales”

or “*mālama i ka ‘āina*” or “we are Noah now,” I believe it is our kuleana to our Creator, to our ancestors, to our non-human siblings, and to all who will come after us to save and to protect. I must be Noah now, and I am asking you to be a Noah, too!

<sup>i</sup> Friedman, Thomas (Sept. 7, 2016). “We Are All Noah Now.” New York Times.

<sup>ii</sup> Friedman, Shoshana (Dec. 6, 2017). “We Are All Noah Now” (Noah, Genesis 6:9-11:32). Available at: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/we-are-all-noah-now\\_b\\_6021970](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/we-are-all-noah-now_b_6021970).

<sup>iii</sup> Gomes, Noah (Jan. 1, 2022). “May Our Silent Forests Sing Again.” *Ka Wai Ola*. Available at: [https://kawaiola.news/aina/may-our-silent-forests-sing-again/?fbclid=IwAR30gakwdCtuBqkGSXgUQtWnuB\\_E34-MJPONXmIojD8n33XIKgO1D1Gqpwo](https://kawaiola.news/aina/may-our-silent-forests-sing-again/?fbclid=IwAR30gakwdCtuBqkGSXgUQtWnuB_E34-MJPONXmIojD8n33XIKgO1D1Gqpwo).

# Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition

Led entirely by youth, the Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition (HYCC) is a growing climate justice organization which coordinates strikes, rallies, and educational events where they advocate for the advancement of climate causes. Their mission is simple: to help shape a just, equitable, and climate-resilient future for our communities here in Hawai'i.

Founded in 2019, HYCC has already been at the forefront of change in Hawai'i.



Dyson Chee

*The Friend* recently reached out to HYCC Executive Director Dyson Chee and asked him to share some

thoughts about the Coalition. To read the entire conversation, go to [hcucc.org/the-friend](https://hcucc.org/the-friend).

## Why do you care about the climate?

I care about the climate because it provides us with stability and security. We know, for a fact, that climate change exacerbates all sorts of issues that range from wildfires to droughts to hurricanes to sea level rise. These aren't the kinds of burdens I want to inherit nor are they the things that I want to pass onto my own children.

## What has been one of HYCC's greatest accomplishments so far?

Helping to pass Bill 40, O'ahu's disposable plastics ban! That was an uphill battle, but thanks to adult trailblazers and some conscientious council members, we were able to push the nation's most stringent disposable plastics ban over the top.

## Share the importance of legislative advocacy in addition to individual actions.

Legislative advocacy is super important because it creates system-wide change that can make a massive difference in a much shorter time than what would be possible with individual actions alone. And sometimes, greed or profit holds back corporations from voluntarily making the kinds of changes that we currently must do in order to combat climate change. When this happens,



legislative advocacy can push bills that mandate these groups to take action. Of course, the tough part is that these corporations often wield tremendous power and influence in our governments. The way we can counter that is by getting involved in legislative advocacy and ensuring that our elected officials are also listening to our voices.

## How do we energize/inspire others to take action? (What has worked for you?)

There is hope! If there was no

YZ [pronounced "wise"] literature is wisdom from the young, Generations Y and Z to be more specific. See how young people are shining, witnessing, and reflecting light.

hope that we could prevent catastrophic climate change, HYCC would not exist. But hope alone isn't enough, we also need action. When we couple action and hope that's when we get things done and save the world.

HYCC wants to support and empower as many youth as possible to take on the climate crisis together. While HYCC is mostly based on O'ahu, there is currently a small representation from Hawai'i Island, Maui, and Kaua'i. HYCC invites youth members from all the Hawaiian Islands and is willing to support efforts from all islands. HYCC works with other organizations from other islands—for example, they recently recorded a video for Kaua'i County to share at their youth conference.

## Ways to support HYCC and their work:

- Know youth who are interested in environmental protection? Share with them about HYCC!
- Help with funding so they can sustain their work!
- Testify on HYCC-backed legislation at the county councils and state legislature! This is one of the most important actions people can do to support their efforts because testimony from the community is extremely important in getting climate-friendly bills passed.

To learn more and see more from youth and young adults, or to submit content for consideration for future pages in *The Friend*, visit our webpage at [hcucc.org/yz-literature](https://hcucc.org/yz-literature).

## News from our Associations and Affiliates

### Congrats to Hawai'i CTCL's First Cohort of Graduates!

The Hawai'i Conference and the Pacific School of Religion (PSR) congratulate our inaugural cohort of graduates of the Certificate in Theological Education for Leadership (CTEL) program! **Caroline Belsom, Jack Belsom, Linda Kaauwai-Iwamoto, Robb Kojima, Tiffany Marrotte, and Roxanne WhiteLight** have completed all 11 courses and two seminars of the 2020-2021 Hawai'i CTCL Program! We look forward to acknowledging their accomplishments more formally at PSR's Commencement Ceremony in May 2022 and at the 'Aha Pae'āina in June 2022.

We are also happy to announce that access to the CTCL program will continue for participants in Hawai'i under the stewardship of Tana



Caroline Belsom



Jack Belsom



Linda Kaauwai-Iwamoto



Robb Kojima



Tiffany Marrotte



Roxanne WhiteLight

Roseboro, the new TEL Program Coordinator. The new cohort will begin in July 2022. Further details will be coming soon!

### Historic Cohort of VST Students from Hawai'i Graduate

Kauanoë Ho'omanawanui, Clara D. Priester, and Rebecca Woodland will be the first three women from Hawai'i to graduate from the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) with a

Master of Divinity degree in May. Kauanoë, a member of Koolau Hui'ia Protestant Church on Kaua'i, was recently unanimously approved for Ordination Pending Call by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches (AHEC). She is the first Native Hawaiian woman to graduate from VST. Clara D. Priester, Executive Director of the Woman's Board of Missions, is thinking of pursuing chaplaincy as a career path. Rebecca Woodland, a member of Central Union Church, is on a pathway to ordination. We congratulate these three outstanding women on their graduation and accomplishments!



(Back row, left to right) Kaulana Ho'omanawanui, Neal MacPherson, Kauanoë Ho'omanawanui, Clara D. Priester, Anita Narag, Rebecca Woodland, Peggy Anne Siegmund. (Front row) Rev. Dr. Raymond C. Aldred, Director, Indigenous Studies, Vancouver School of Theology.

# Conference News and Highlights

Go to [www.hcucc.org](http://www.hcucc.org) to learn more about these and many more stories from around the Conference.

## Pastoral Transitions



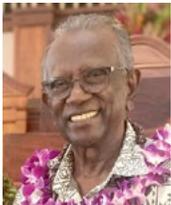
**Robert Bork** has answered the call to serve as Settled Pastor of Kapa'a United Church of Christ on Kaua'i.

His first Sunday was March 6. He and his spouse Michael have three sons: Zakk (28 years old and living on his own), Kyle (15), and Bentley (6).

**Inok Lautej** was ordained by the President of the JRD (Jarin Rarik Drom), the United Church of Christ in the



Marshall Islands on March 13. He has been called to serve as Pastor of the newly established First Marshallese Church in Waimea, Kaua'i.



**Sam Masilamoney** was installed as Kahu and Kumu of Kona Lanakila Congregational Church on Hawai'i Island on March 27.

**Douglas Wooten** concluded his ministry as Kahu with Kaumakapili Church in Honolulu on March 27. He and his wife Yulanda have



relocated to Indianapolis, IN, where Kahu has answered the call to serve as Senior Pastor of Immanuel United Church of Christ.

**Kaunoe Ho'omanawanui** was unanimously approved by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches



(AHEC) for Ordination Pending Call at an Ecclesiastical Council on April 9. She is a recent graduate of the Vancouver School of Theology with a Master of Divinity degree.



**Dale Vallejo-Sanderson** concluded his ministry with Kailua Christian Church on April 17.

**Nan Riddle** concluded her ministry with Waialua United Church of Christ on O'ahu on May 1. She served this faith community since December 2020.



**Richard Miller** concluded his ministry with Kana'ana Hou – Siloama Church in Kalaupapa on Moloka'i on May 1, after almost

20 years of service at Kalaupapa National Historical Park and with the church. He has relocated to the continent.

**Reynaldo Desengano** has been called to serve as Pastor with Moanalua Community Church on O'ahu. He and his wife, Estela, arrived on O'ahu from the Bay Area on April 29 and his first Sunday as Pastor was May 1.



**Malia Galindo** recently began her ministry as the Associate Minister for Families and Youth with Church of the Crossroads in

Honolulu. She was recently ordained as a Disciples of Christ minister and is a 2021 graduate of Claremont

## Conference Calendar of Events

### JUNE 10

King Kamehameha Day  
(Office Closed)

### JUNE 12 - 18

200th 'Aha Pae'aina  
(online and in-person)

### JUNE 14

Installation of Jonathan C. Roach as Associate Conference Minister by Hawai'i Island Association

### JUNE 20

Juneteenth Day (Office Closed)

School of Theology with a Master of Divinity degree.

**Jonathan Stockton** resigned from his position as Pastor with Wananalua Congregational Church in Hana, Maui.

**Michael Warren**, pastor of Kalapana Maunakea Congregational Church on Hawai'i Island, had his standing reinstated by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches (AHEC) Committee on Ministry on May 2.



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 \$15 will pay for one person's subscription for one year. Gifts may be sent to the Hawai'i Conference UCC, 1848 Nu'uuanu Avenue, Honolulu, HI, 96817.

May 2022

KA PAPA HO'OLĀLĀ

## Faithful Justice

LINDA RICH, CHAIR, JUSTICE AND WITNESS MISSIONAL TEAM

Our Conference's Mission Statement lifts up the work of justice with the words: "sent forth by the Spirit, we walk humbly in Christ's footsteps pursuing peace, justice, and the renewal of all creation." The Justice and Witness Missional Team's work is grounded in the Biblical imperative to "do justice." This message is consistent with our God who seeks justice, fairness, and the end of oppression. Here, in part, is what the Bible tells us about justice:

"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."—Amos 5:24

"He has told you, O human, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"  
—Micah 6:8

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free. . ."—Luke 4:18 - 21

Christ calls us to love our neighbor. To truly love our neighbors and to show aloha, we must work to end injustice and oppression. The Justice and Witness Missional Team seeks to equip congregations on justice and witness initiatives and provide materials, resources, guidance, and support to congregations.

This year we have issued a statement on the Navy's contamination of water at Kapūkākā (Red Hill) and signed a faith leaders' statement, which was published in the *Star Advertiser*. We are also developing webinars to present the historic,

factual history of the Mission to Hawai'i and the Hawaiian church. Webinars were presented on a just wage and on full inclusion of LGBTQ individuals in our church. The Reconciliation Working Group is developing recommendations on how our Conference and Foundation might more fully live into our apology promise to support justice for Native Hawaiians. The Micronesian Committee offers theological education to Micronesian pastors and partners with One Stop Center for Micronesians on Hawai'i Island.

Let us know how we can help and support your local congregational initiatives.

Meet our team at our 'Aha Pae'aina workshop in June!

