

Change Is the Focus for Leaders Event

By Jack Belsom, Makawao Union Church



Jeffrey Jones

Jeffrey D. Jones, former Director of Ministry Studies at Andover Newton Theological School, will keynote the annual Church Leaders Event taking place on February 24, 2018, at Church of the Crossroads.

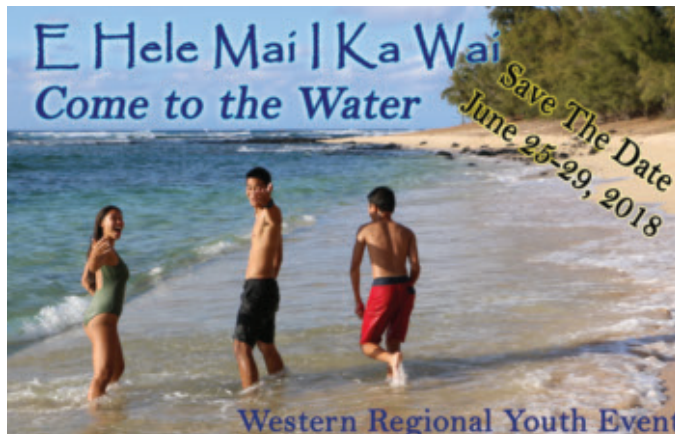
Distinct in format from previous years, the event will center around facilitated small group discussions rather than workshops. Jeffrey, who authored the

book *Facing Decline, Finding Hope: New Possibilities for Faithful Churches*, will explore how congregations can adapt to our changing societal landscape.

Jeffrey's morning presentation will cover important questions such as: How can churches remain vital in the face of declining attendance? What if membership growth is not the primary goal of a church? Why doesn't the traditional way of doing church work in today's world? What is God calling your church to do in these changing times?

In the afternoon session, participants will break into small groups to discuss ways of living into a new paradigm of being the church. Jeffrey, who has served as an Associate Professor of Ministerial Leadership and as a national staffer of the American Baptist Churches USA, will offer insight about how to cultivate and support church leadership.

The Formation Missional Team of the Hawai'i Conference, which is organizing the event, plans to follow up with participants on all islands. Complete information about this year's Church Leaders Event, including registration forms, will be sent to churches in January.



Regional Youth Event Comes to Hawai'i

Every four years, youth from the eight western conferences of the United Church of Christ gather for inspirational worship, learning and fellowship at the Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE). This year's event, themed "Come to the Water (*E Hele Mai I Ka Wai*)," will take place June 25-29 at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

About 350 high school youth from 12 states are expected to participate. Programming will include keynote speakers, workshops, service-learning projects and other activities.

"Many workshops will come from our local churches and leaders," said Brandon Duran, Associate Pastor of Central Union Church and the point person for organizing the event. "We talked about having workshops on hula or making lei, but also workshops connected to service projects like visiting organic farms and exploring Hawaiian culture and history."

Other workshops will include topics such as justice activism and art, ways of engaging in prayer, the work of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and various subjects soon to be finalized.

Taking a cue from previous events, the organizers hope to send a powerful message to youth by featuring keynote speakers who are youth themselves. The majority of the keynoters will likely hail from Hawai'i, said Brandon.

On a day devoted to service-learning projects, youth will connect with organizations such as The Institute for Human Services to learn about issues of homelessness and affordable housing. Other tentative projects include a beach clean-up and visiting sustainable farms.

Among the goals for the WRYE are to inspire youth

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Parting Thoughts

By Iese Tuuao, Acting Conference Minister



I began serving as your Acting Conference Minister on July 5, 2017. And just the day before, July 4, the last day of the 31st General Synod held in Baltimore, the Hawai'i delegation stood at the floor of the assembly to celebrate outgoing Conference Minister Charles Buck's 13 years of ministry with us. It was a sacred moment filled with pride

and gratitude to God for Charles' ministry on behalf of the many churches and clergy of the Hawai'i Conference. I was overwhelmed with joy and love for Charles and his family as his hard work and devotion to our Conference came to an end.

My appointment as Acting Conference Minister was approved by the Conference Council following this year's 'Aha Pae'aina when the search committee tasked with finding an Interim Conference Minister had not yet selected a candidate. The original plan was for me to serve for three months; however, my appointment was extended to the end of the year to accommodate our new Interim Conference Minister's plans for her official start date in January 2018.

I must say that for almost six months on the job, I have not found a dull moment in the office or in meeting people and pastors from churches throughout our Conference. Your Conference Office is a great place to work; we have the best staff, professional and devoted to their work. I take this moment to thank them for their service to God, our churches and pastors.

I feel honored for the great privilege to have served in this capacity for the Hawai'i Conference.

I am also grateful to the Conference Council for appointing me to this position. I feel honored for the great privilege to have served in this capacity for the Hawai'i Conference. Thank you for the trust you have given me, for your encouragement and for the spirit of aloha that embraces me.

We are now in the midst of our Conference-wide strategic planning process that began in September. Our hope is to have a strategic plan to present at the 196th 'Aha Pae'aina to help guide our future. In developing this strategic plan we will need our collective efforts under the able leadership of

our esteemed consultant Cynthia Scherr.

In closing, I would like to welcome incoming Intentional Interim Conference Minister Gabrielle Fackre Chavez, who will begin serving the Hawai'i Conference in early January 2018. I had a chance to meet Gabrielle during her visit to Hawai'i in October to meet the Conference Council and the Hawai'i Conference Foundation Board of Trustees. She will lead the Conference through the transitional period and collaborate with Cynthia Scherr and a strategy team to develop a strategic plan for our Conference. I hope that you will join me in welcoming her to our Conference with open hearts and minds, with prayers and greetings of aloha and best wishes.

Thank you for the trust you have given me, for your encouragement and for the spirit of aloha that embraces me.

Conference Updates

- Contributions to Our Church's Wider Mission and UCC special offerings need to be remitted to the Hawai'i Conference by Wednesday, January 10, 2018, to be credited for 2017.
- The Conference's strategic planning team has been meeting regularly. For updates on the strategic planning process, visit: <http://bit.ly/2xeNMgg>.
- The 'Aha Makua of the 196th 'Aha Pae'aina will be held June 8-9 at Community Church of Honolulu (2345 Nu'uano Avenue, Honolulu). The 'Aha Iki will take place June 6-7 at a location to be determined.



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The Gift of Presence on Christmas

Christmas is ostensibly “the most wonderful time of the year,” but for many people it is a season of profound pain and sorrow. This article serves as a reminder to be sensitive to the suffering of others during the holidays.



Danette Kong

“There is a very pronounced grief that comes with the holidays,” explained Danette Kong, a retired hospital chaplain of over 15 years in Hawai‘i. “People are realizing, ‘This is my last holiday; I am dying.’ Others are mourning the loss of a loved one or broken family relationships.”

While children anxiously await opening presents on Christmas Day, it is the power of presence—not presents—that brings comfort to people facing their own mortality. Church members are encouraged to keep this in mind when helping people deal with illness and grief.

“I always emphasize the power of presence,” said Cindy Au, a former chaplain. “People don’t remember what you said, but they remember that you were there for them. That makes the biggest difference.”



Cindy Au

Chris Eng, a chaplain with Hospice Hawai‘i, explained that holding Blue Christmas services can be a powerful way for churches to be present for people who are grieving. The service allows participants to affirm their feelings, know that they are not alone and light a candle for loved ones who passed away. Danette also emphasized the healing value of this service.



Chris Eng

Another means for churches to be present for people who are suffering is to offer support groups. Meeting face-to-face with others who have experienced loss, as well as having a pastor perform comforting rituals, can be very meaningful and healing.

To illustrate the power of presence, Cindy, who has visited the sick and terminally ill for 25 years, told the story of a United States military general whose wife recently died. Overcome with grief and seeking the meaning of life, he ignored Cindy the first two times she visited him. But because Cindy was persistent and patient, he ultimately found peace and comfort before his own passing.

“He was not afraid to die,” she said. “In fact, he wished for it

Churches Partner for Internship Program

By Dorothy Lester, Lana‘i Union Church, and Kristen Young, UCC—Judd Street



Six years ago, Nu‘uanu Congregational Church started a College Summer Internship program which provided formational space in which college students can explore the connection between their faith and vocation as they learn to serve God. Interns have come from various places including Nu‘uanu Congregational Church (NCC), United Church of Christ—Judd Street (UCC Judd), Kailua Christian Church and Ola‘a First Hawaiian Church.

This past summer, Mary Herbig, Associate Pastor of UCC Judd, and Lori Yamashiro from NCC, led their churches in forming a partnership to co-sponsor the College Summer Internship program. This expanded partnership with UCC Judd provided more resources, options and learning opportunities.

While some things have changed, Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Lana‘i Union Church has been a part of the College Summer Internship since the program’s inception. Since 2011, a team that has included the interns, high school youth and several adults from NCC has spent a week on Lana‘i leading VBS. With UCC Judd’s participation, it became a three-church partnership spanning two islands.

Lana‘i Union Church welcomes their Honolulu partners who bring creative plans for exploring biblical stories, many needed art and school supplies, and fun music to share. Twenty to 30 Lana‘i youth have annually spent a week in July expanding their knowledge of the Bible, singing and enjoying the friendship and attention of VBS leaders. Even though VBS ends at noon, the kids come back to join their Honolulu friends at the county pool, on the basketball court or just to talk story in the church’s backyard. They cannot remember a summer without the young men and women who come to Lana‘i from Honolulu churches and beyond.

The relationship with Lana‘i Union Church has expanded

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Faces Around the Conference

The Friend

Associations Gather for Fall Meetings



Tragedy and Discovery at Kalaupapa



Stan Chong (center) visits his grandfather's grave with relatives.

For most of his life, Stan Chong was unaware of a reality that has forever tied his heart and family to a painful time in Hawaiian history.

Some 15 years ago, the longtime member of Nu'uuanu Congregational Church discovered that his grandfather, Fung Tung Shu, was seized by health authorities on Hawai'i Island upon suspicion of Hansen's Disease in 1923. Tung Shu was exiled to the remote Kalaupapa peninsula on Moloka'i, where he and an estimated 8,000 others lived and died in isolation. His fatherless family was destitute and would have starved if not for the kindness of their neighbors.



Fung Tung Shu

In the early 1900s, families associated with Hansen's Disease were shunned by society. As a result, Tung Shu's story was kept secret for decades.

"It wasn't something talked about in our family," Stan said. "My mom never knew her father and she never spoke of him. It must have been too painful."

Stan remained unaware of his grandfather's story until his aunt was interviewed by a relative for a family history project. He discovered that Tung Shu may never have contracted Hansen's Disease—at least not prior to living in Kalaupapa. He blew off his right hand and lost an eye while dynamite fishing in 1910, leaving him disfigured and easily mistaken as afflicted.

This summer, over 15 years after realizing his grandfather was buried in Kalaupapa, Stan and his sister organized a pilgrimage to visit Tung Shu's grave and pay their respects.

"It was very uplifting to find my grandfather's grave," he said. "I feel fortunate that his grave is marked so that we could locate it; someone had enough aloha for him to do that."

Interestingly, Tung Shu is buried in one of Kalaupapa's Hawaiian cemeteries, not its Chinese cemetery. Stan speculates that his Hawaiian-speaking grandfather could not afford to pay dues to the Chinese Burial Society, so one of Kalaupapa's patients—90

percent of whom were Native Hawaiian—marked his grave with a concrete slab and lava rock.

"My grandfather lived a hard life, but it is moving to know that people loved him," said Stan. "I think he would be happy to know that we are not working in the *lo'i* (taro patches) anymore and many of us have college degrees and careers—a far different life than he ever lived."

Unlike Stan's grandfather, most patients at Kalaupapa will never have their graves visited by family. Today fewer than 1,000 graves are identifiable.

In an effort to honor the lives of all 8,000 patients sent to

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mission Offering

Kalaupapa Sunday

On the fourth Sunday of every January, churches are invited to commemorate the estimated 8,000 people diagnosed with Hansen's Disease who were exiled to Moloka'i's remote Kalaupapa peninsula.

Resources for observing Kalaupapa Sunday are available on the Hawai'i Conference website (www.hcucc.org). A resolution passed at the 195th 'Aha Pae'aina also encourages churches and individuals to make donations toward the erection and maintenance of a memorial listing the names of every person sent to Kalaupapa. Funds may be donated to the nonprofit Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa.

The suggested date for observing Kalaupapa Sunday is January 28, 2018, though churches may honor the patients of Kalaupapa and their families any Sunday in the year.

Henry 'Opukaha'ia Scholarship

Henry 'Opukaha'ia Scholarships, which honor the legacy of the young Hawaiian credited with inspiring the Sandwich Islands mission that brought Christianity to Hawai'i, are available to candidates for ministry attending an accredited seminary and clergy pursuing continuing education.

Churches are invited to receive an offering to support these scholarships on Sunday, February 18, 2018. The offering may also be collected on another date.

News briefs are adapted from *UCC News*, the online news portal for the United Church of Christ. For details on this and other stories, visit www.ucc.org/news.

Retirement Housing Foundation Makes Major Donation to Hurricane Relief



Residents, team members and friends of Retirement Housing Foundation (RHF) donated more than \$100,000 to assist those affected by Hurricanes

Harvey, Irma and Maria. As part of a matching gift campaign, RHF pledged to match up to \$50,000 donated by congregations, conferences, residents and employees.

With over \$56,000 in donations coming in and adding to the \$50,000 of matching funds, the UCC's 2017 Hurricane Relief Fund received a gift of a little over \$106,650 through RHF. RHF is a non-profit organization that provides housing and services for older adults and is a member of the Council for Health and Human Services Ministries (CHHSM) of the UCC.

Rev. Laverne Joseph, RHF President and CEO, said, "We tried to make life better for people, which is why we do this each time."

(Kalaupapa, continued from page 5)

Kalaupapa, the advocacy group Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa has launched a campaign to erect a memorial that will list and preserve their names. In 2009, President Barack Obama signed into law the Kalaupapa Memorial Act, which authorizes the group to do so before the last of Kalaupapa's 13 remaining patients die.

"The memorial will bring all the people back into the history they helped to create," said Executive Director of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, Valerie Monson. "We now have a digital archive with information for about 7,000 people and are preparing to enter a fundraising phase."

The 195th 'Aha Pae'aina of the Hawai'i Conference unanimously passed a resolution encouraging churches and members to support The Kalaupapa Memorial by making donations toward its completion for the benefit of future generations.

For Stan, who is a member of Ka 'Ohana O Kalaupapa, the importance of erecting the memorial is made clear through his own personal experience: "My family lives in many places now, mostly on O'ahu and California, but even as far away as Japan. A large piece of our heart and of our 'ohana will always be with our grandfather at Kalaupapa."

(Christmas Presence, continued from page 3)

because at Christmastime he recalled the memories of his deceased wife. But he told me, 'I know I am not alone. You are here,' so he did not pass in loneliness or anger."

Major holidays not only have the power to inflict sorrow, but to bring about healing. The uplifting power of Christmas is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in whom hope exists, said Cindy.

If you know someone who is grieving this holiday season, remember the advice of these three chaplains to remain present for them.

(Regional Youth Event, continued from page 1)



Youth from Hawai'i at the 2014 WRYE

through worship among contemporaries; encourage participation in issues of justice, compassion and charity; develop life skills and self-confidence; and evoke a deeper sense of connection to the UCC, said Brandon.

"When I was a youth, I attended a regional gathering like this," he said. "That experience definitely fanned the flames of God calling on my heart to ministry. Looking back, I clearly see that moment as one of the touchstones for when people ask me why I am a pastor."

Registration for the WRYE is expected to open soon. Cost is \$475 for early registration and \$495 for late registration. Full details will be disclosed as they become available.

(Internship Program, continued from page 3)

beyond VBS. A Lana'i family with a very sick child was sent to a Honolulu hospital. In the "big city" away from the support of family and friends, the family found Christ's love expressed by pastors and interns that they knew from VBS. To have familiar faces visiting them at the hospital brought much needed comfort, kindness and support during an extremely difficult time. This could only have been possible through the partnerships of these UCC churches.

Plans are underway for next year's VBS as the partnership of churches, children and interns grows and flourishes. As Kristen Young of UCC Judd, who was a College Summer Intern in 2013, notes, "Although VBS is only a week long, this short week every summer is no short-term mission. It is part of something much greater—a significant partnership between UCC churches and communities in Hawai'i. Being able to connect with different church communities throughout the years has reminded me that we all serve the same God and we really are one church, united in Christ."

Highlights from the Website

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

Pastoral Changes

Jack Belsom began as Interim Pastor of Makawao Union Church on September 21.

David Hirano began as Interim Pastor of Pearl City Community Church on October 1. He was most recently interim at Kaunakapili Church.

Alpha Goto began as part-time Interim Pastor at Wai'oli Hui'ia Church on October 6.

Services of Ordination and Installation

Scott Furukawa was ordained and installed as Pastor of Waialua United Church of Christ by the O'ahu Association on October 22.

Florentino Cordova was installed as Pastor of Iao United Church of Christ by the Tri-Isle Association on November 12.

Thomas Tsen was installed as Chinese Pastor of The First Chinese Church of Christ in Hawai'i on November 12.



Merry Christmas from the staff of the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ and the Hawai'i Conference Foundation

In Memory: Michael Christensen



Michael Christensen, 68, Pastor of Hanapepe United Church of Christ, died on October 23 while on sabbatical in Australia. He was called to serve Hanapepe UCC in 2014 and was recognized and celebrated for 40 years of ordained ministry at the 'Aha Pae'aina this past June.

Michael's family includes his wife of 44 years, Gail, and his daughters Jeannine, Rebecca, Ellen and their families. People wishing to give a gift in memory of Michael are asked to donate to Hanapepe United Church of Christ.

Conference Calendar of Events

December 25	Christmas Holiday (Office Closed)
January 1	New Year's Holiday (Office Closed)
January 15	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (Office Closed)
January 27	State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches Board
February 9-10	AHEC 'Aha Halawai
February 19	Presidents' Day (Office Closed)
February 24	Church Leaders Event

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'uanu Ave., Honolulu, HI 96817.



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Our Historical Roots

Rev. Edward Kahale

By Richard Kamanu, Associate Conference Minister



*Courtesy of
Kawaiahaʻo Church*

As a young child, one of the pastors whom I grew to love was the Rev. Edward Kahale. Kahu Kahale had a unique way of capturing the attention of children with his message. Using colored chalk, he told Bible stories while drawing out the scenery on a chalkboard. When he ended the story we beheld an amazing scene of Jesus and his sheep or the nativity crèche.

Kahale once served as a circuit rider preacher along the Kona coast and would drive his Model T down the winding roads to the village of Miloliʻi. One Sunday morning he noted that all the fishing boats had gone out to sea and when he got to the small church at the end of the road, there was only a grandmother and her granddaughter waiting for him to lead worship. He nevertheless shared a brief message with them and together they ate the bread and juice he had brought for communion.

The next month, Mauna Loa erupted and its lava flow blocked the road to Miloliʻi. Later, when the lava cooled enough for Kahale to walk over the flow to visit the village, he noted that all the fishing boats were on shore. When he arrived for worship the church was overflowing with fishermen and their families.

Kahale served as Pastor of Haili Church before becoming Kahu of Kawaiahaʻo Church from 1937-47. Fluent in English as well as Hawaiian, he served as Kawaiahaʻo's seventh pastor during World War II. During this time of upheaval and uncertainty, Kawaiahaʻo remained steadfast under Kahale's unwavering spiritual leadership and was a much-needed beacon of hope.

Kahale, together with the Rev. Abraham Akaka, was instrumental in getting the Hawaiian churches to affiliate with the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA). HEA went on to join the newly-formed United Church of Christ in 1959 when HEA became part of the Hawaii Conference UCC.

Kahale is fondly remembered by many to this day.