

March 16, 2020

Aloha Pastors, Church Leaders, and Association Leaders,

First, I want to share my gratitude for the thoughtful considerations many of you have put into the decision to move your church worship online as best you can. Some of you even shared online services with neighboring congregations which did not have the wherewithal to do that themselves. I have heard of congregations organizing so as to stay in touch with one another and to help our *kupuna* to remain safe. Everywhere I turn I see the compassion of Christ modeled in our congregations and in your nimble leadership.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is asking that all gatherings of 50 people or more to stop for eight weeks. After much prayer and conversations with UCC leaders, the Hawai'i Conference Office strongly recommends that you move your worship to other platforms for the next eight Sundays. This means forgoing public worship in our church buildings until May 18. At the end of February I sent out a letter encouraging all our churches, pastors, and leaders to think through a plan around this scenario; now is the time to enact that plan. We also encourage all Association events to move to online meetings including Boards and Committees on Ministry.

It is not an act of faith to ignore the CDC recommendation in the thought that "God will protect us." It is an act of faith to understand that science and medical expertise are part of God's providential care for us and to act on the care God provides. Faith does not shelter us from the storm; faith is what gets us through the storm.

I am aware that this eight-week period includes Holy Week and Easter. The encouragement here is to imaginatively think through how our congregations can celebrate the resurrection of Christ without a need to gather together. I know the temptation will be to suspend social distancing through this period of the church calendar; however, such temptation is an appeal to our egos only. Resurrection is not relegated to a worship service. The journey of Holy Week, at its heart, is the individual's journey to rejection, death, and new life. This journey can be accomplished, creatively and wonderfully, through forms other than corporate worship.

I do not think I have all the answers for the next eight weeks. To that end, I invite all who wish to be a part of a conference-wide Zoom meeting this coming **Thursday, March 19**, at 10 a.m. (link below). Together we can share ideas and resources as well as check in with one another. Keep an eye on the Conference website's new [Health and Safety](#) page as appropriate information will be posted there along with a video on "4 Easy Steps" for live streaming.

Thank you for taking this advice seriously and keeping our wider Hawaiian community safe.

David Popham

Rev. Dr. David K. Popham
Conference Minister
Hawai'i Conference, United Church of Christ

Let's Zoom!

Hawaii Conference UCC is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Time: Thursday, March 19, 2020 at 10:00 AM Hawaii Standard Time

Purpose: To share ideas and resources as well as check in with one another

Join Zoom Meeting <https://zoom.us/j/123575492>

Meeting ID: 123 575 492

OR

Call +1 669 900 6833
Meeting ID: 123 575 492

(Please note that this is not a toll free number so it would be better to call using your cell phone)