

O'ahu Mokupuni Ponders Church, Change, and Challenge

BY WAYNE IBARA,
MAKIKI CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Conference Ministers Don Remick and Bill Lyons addressed the challenge of changing times at the Hawai'i Conference 'Aha Pae'āina in early June, and for some O'ahu delegates, it might have felt like a continuation of the spring Mokupuni at Makiki Christian Church in May. There, Makiki Resource Ministry Board Chair Bernie Kim, Punahou School Chaplain Joshua Hayashi, and Pastor Wayne Ibara presented the story of Makiki's four-year-long journey in the wilderness of Church, Change, and Challenge. The event served as an encouragement for churches to discern what is going on today in the world and in the church.

Wayne Ibara described Phyllis Tickle's concept of the "500-Year Rummage Sale"—what seems to be a historic and regular cycle of enormous shifts that reshape the church and the world. Five



Makiki Christian Church

hundred years ago it was the Reformation. Before that, the Great Schism dividing the Latin Church in the West and the Greek Church in the East. Before that, the Dark Ages. Before that, the advent of our faith.

What to do in such tumultuous times? In Luke 12, Jesus criticized the crowd for being unable to "interpret the present time." He likely meant the signs of his ministry, pointing to the in-breaking of the realm of God. The difficulty of the crowd in his day to interpret the signs may parallel our own task of discerning in our time. What is God up to, and how shall we, the church, respond?

Joshua Hayashi highlighted some current "markers of our church's trajectory": denominational decline; the average age of serving pastors; the ability of congregations to pay a full-time pastor; the increasing challenge of fixed expenses, such as building upkeep and insurance; and rental income equaling or surpassing offerings. He also noted that while in 1960 the United Church of Christ represented the main Protestant presence in Hawai'i, that picture has changed dramatically.

Joshua Hayashi mentioned disruptive technologies: during the Reformation, it was the printing press; today, it is computers, the internet, and social media. He also drew an analogy familiar to many families—what to do with the old family house. He evoked a letter that many children are pained to send: Dear mom and dad...None of us wants the house.

Bernie Kim presented a Powerpoint reviewing Makiki Christian's process of assessing building maintenance needs while coming to a clearer realization

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The Winds of Change Are Blowing through the Hawai'i Conference



Iese Tuuao

Major personnel changes are happening in the Hawai'i Conference. We are pleased to welcome back Iese Tuuao as our Acting Conference Minister. He joined the staff on July 15 and will serve until September 20, after the settled Conference Minister, David Popham, arrives. Iese is the Pastor of Samoan Church of Hawai'i, LMS Nānākuli, and also serves on the

national Pension Boards UCC Board of Directors. He previously served as Acting Conference Minister prior to the arrival of Gabrielle Chavez in 2018.

We bid a fond aloha to Gabrielle Chavez as she concluded her ministry with us as our Intentional Interim Conference Minister, a position she held from January 2018 to mid-July 2019. She has returned to Portland, Oregon, where she will begin a

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Continuing the Healing Conversation

BY GABRIELLE CHAVEZ, FORMER INTERIM CONFERENCE MINISTER

My last month among you has featured two large meetings, the 197th 'Aha Pae'āina in Honolulu and the 32nd General Synod of the UCC in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, whose reports fill the pages of this issue of *The Friend*. Between and since these has been a constant whirl of smaller but no less significant gatherings as we do the work of the Hawai'i Conference and Foundation in worship, administration, learning, fellowship, and service.

Reflecting at the end of my term, I lift up one thing, which, when it has been present, has made every meeting satisfying and life giving. This occurs when we manage to create conversations where everyone feels free to speak, trusting what they share will be received with an open heart and mind. Such conversations build trust and understanding among us while making authentic space for many points of view. As trust and understanding grow, anxiety lessens and we find ourselves working together, not apart. We begin to marvel at the rich diversity of gifts that are suddenly freely offered for the mission.

While any gathering in our Conference can, and often does, have its high points, two meetings where I have reliably



experienced this life-giving wonder are those of the Reconciliation Working Group and Community of Practice for Visionary Pastoral Leaders.

The purpose of the former—26 years after the 1993 actions of the UCC and HCUCc to make apology, redress, and reconciliation for the church's complicity in the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom—is to discover what the unfinished business of reconciliation is and how the church may engage in it anew. The purpose of a Community of Practice is to engage peer support, learning, and spiritual refreshment, particularly for pastoral leaders.

These two groups, though organized for different reasons, have elements in common which amount to a recipe or formula that could make any of our church meetings become healing conversations across current divides.

First, they are intentional and everyone knows why she or he is there. Second, they ask for a commitment of presence as big as the purpose is important. Third, they are led by well-prepared facilitators

whose aim is not to “run a meeting” but host a life-giving mutual conversation.

The first two elements are simply a matter of clarity and choice among the group participants. Becoming an effective conversation host, however, is both the fruit of spiritual discipline and a learnable skill.

There are many effective approaches for leading healing conversations one could learn or absorb. The Reconciliation Working Group is blessed to have facilitators skilled in ho'oponopono keeping us focused, honest, and heart-centered. Everyone in this highly conflicted working group is improving relational skills as a result.

A highlight of the interim for me has been the many healing conversations I have experienced among us wherever I have traveled. I have seen what great medicine they are for all of our HCUCc 'ohana's troubles and hopes. Knowing that you have called a new Conference Minister who is both longing for and skilled in hosting conversations, I leave grateful to God and the HCUCc 'ohana, confident in continued healing.

Aloha kākou,

Gabrielle

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of the scope of change taking place today. Beyond building maintenance lie crucial questions: What is our salvation for? What is the church here for? For Makiki, missional theology introduced by the New Creation Initiative in the early 2000's, along with more recent resources like the video series “For the Life of the World,” have challenged the traditional church mindset. As Don Remick and Bill Lyons said at the 'Aha Pae'āina, it is no longer sufficient that folks “come to church”; today we must embrace new ways of “being the church.” What are our options when a younger generation might

respond to being sent out as salt and light in the world, but not so much to simply “coming to church” to keep the lights on?

For Makiki, the missional perspective helped church leaders to understand the purpose of the church—not simply to grow bigger, but to point to and demonstrate something of the reign of God. These questions of identity and purpose helped the church to begin to address the challenge today.

Bernie Kim's presentation is available at www.hcucc.org. Go to the Coconut Wireless issue for May 22, 2019, for the report of the Mokupuni.



God is still speaking

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'Aha Pae'āina Workshops Offer Variety of Topics

Attendees at the 'Aha Pae'āina were offered opportunities to attend two workshops on Friday afternoon. Topics included the New Beginnings program, the changing landscape churches find themselves in, #MeToo Movement, Strategic Initiatives from HCUCC's Strategic Plan, Micronesian ministries, Mohala Farms, mission and ministry in the HCUCC, and the b1 platform.



Micronesian workshop at 'Aha

workshops, "The Hawai'i Conference in the #MeToo Era: Stories from the Heart," and "Opportunities to Respond to the #MeToo Movement." In the first workshop, three women

Two of the workshops—"The Hawai'i Conference in the #MeToo Era: Stories from the Heart," and "Opportunities to Respond to the #MeToo Movement" were offered as part of the Conference's response to a complaint of sexual misconduct by a former Hawai'i Conference pastor. Janice Ogoshi, Pastor of Hawai'i Kai United Church of Christ, and Gloria Imamura, Associate Pastor of Makiki Christian Church, participated in the planning process. Janice describes the two workshops:

Rachael Wong from One Shared Future organized the two

from different backgrounds outside the UCC courageously shared their stories of sexual abuse and harassment, how they struggled to find help, and began to heal. We learned the importance of bringing such stories to light so that we can begin to address root causes and attitudes that have allowed harassment and abuse to occur.

In the second workshop, leaders from the military, nonprofit, and business communities shared how their organizations have responded to the #MeToo movement with

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Youth Stewards were invited to help and learn

Youth Stewards Reflect on 'Aha Pae'āina

Delegates and visitors from across the Hawai'i Conference gathered at Kaumakapili Church in Honolulu for the 197 'Aha Pae'āina June 5-8. There were 188 people representing 66 churches in attendance. Here's what our Youth Stewards thought of the event:

Sonny, Iao UCC

I was surprised that we got to lead the service. Everything was memorable, especially being with the other youth and having fun together.

Jack, Iao UCC

My favorite part was traveling to O'ahu 'cause it was my first time. I also liked meeting other youth and eating the different foods from the churches. I was surprised at how long the meeting was.

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Reflections from General Synod Delegates

Hawai'i's delegation to the UCC's General Synod 32 joined over 2500 attendees June 21-25, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They enjoyed dynamic worship, inspiring speakers, intense discussions in their small groups, witnessing for social justice, and much, much more. Read their reflections of their experiences at General Synod. Below are excerpts edited for length and clarity. Read their full reflections on the Hawai'i Conference website.

It had been twenty years since I attended a General Synod. I found that some things have changed; other things have not. What has changed is the way in which the General Synod makes its decisions. The resolution process has been simplified and is less cumbersome. Floor debates, even on issues that are highly charged, were orderly and less contentious, thus leading to a greater sense of unity. —Neal MacPherson

Many of the resolutions were not easy issues and could have been hot buttons if not for all the work to craft the wording and the background for the resolutions. In these discussions I got to see the spirit at work through the delegates. —Sue Smith

My favorite part of the Synod would have to be the worship services. It's just crazy to me to think that all in one room are people from all over the country, as well as some outside, coming together and

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Faces Around the Conference

Conference Gathers for 197th 'Aha Pae'āina



People of the Hawai'i Conference



Kyle Lovett marches to ICE Office in Milwaukee



Kerrie and David Popham



Gabrielle Chavez with HIA COM Chair Eric Anderson



Reconciliation Working Group pray at the birthing stone



Mahalo and Aloha Staff Luncheon for Gabrielle



Kasey Sabin and Dorothy Lester join march at General Synod



Retired Clergy Luncheon at Conference Office



HCUCC General Synod delegation



Kerisa Carmelo speaks out at General Synod



Gabrielle Chavez protests inhumane treatment of immigrants

Neighbors in Need

Neighbors In Need (NIN) is a mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

The Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) and its witness among indigenous churches and people receives one-third of NIN funds. Two-thirds finance a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through awarded grants to UCC organizations. Grants ranging from \$1,000–



\$10,000 are awarded for projects that address one of the following areas: the rights and freedoms of all persons, environmental justice, or economic justice, and whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy.

The suggested date to receive the offering is World Communion Sunday, October 6, but churches may select another Sunday.

For more information and to apply for a grant, visit www.ucc.org/nin.

[\(Youth Stewards, continued from page 3\)](#)

Loea, Kapa'a UCC

I liked meeting the other youth and serving communion in the service. I was glad that Pastor David [Popham] came to meet the youth stewards. Mahalo to all who gave me this amazing opportunity

Jane, Central Union

I really like how I stepped out of my comfort zone and spoke for the first time in front of all these people I didn't know.

Angeljoy, Central Union

My favorite things to do were read the prayer at Kaumakapili Church in the closing worship and

sleep over at Nu'uano Congregational Church with the other youth.

Malia, Lāna'i Union

One thing I enjoyed from the trip was the youth we met. They were all nice and kind. Another thing I enjoyed was getting in a circle and sharing our own reflections based on God's word.

Jovenson, Lāna'i Union

I liked being with Pastor Jack [Belsom] again and getting to know the other kids. I met lots of people including the conference minister candidate David and his wife Kerrie.

PAAM Members Lead Prayerful Worship at Synod

Members of Pacific Islander and Asian American Ministries (PAAM) UCC led a moving worship service at General Synod 32 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Sharon Lee MacArthur, Interim Minister of Community Church of Honolulu, delivered the message, in which she shared her sorrows, struggles and challenges of growing up in an immigrant family. She shared a message of hope for all who feel overwhelmed by darkness, that "God's love and light shine perhaps even brighter when coming from a place of darkness."



UCC Elects Two National Officers in Milwaukee

At General Synod this past June, the United Church of Christ reelected its General Minister and President and elected a new Associate General Minister of Global Engagement. The Rev. John C. Dorhauer will continue as General Minister and President for a second term over the next four years, which will be his last term in this office. Receiving overwhelming support from delegates, the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson will be the new Associate General Minister of Global Engagement, following the departure of Jim Moos, who retired at the conclusion of General Synod. She will serve in that position for a four-year term, beginning August 1.

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.

[Winds of Change, continued from page 1](#)

new interim ministry at Hillsdale United Church of Christ in August. She and her husband, **Thomas**, shared a multitude of gifts and talents with us, and they will be missed!



Thomas and Gabrielle Chavez



Sherman Hee

Sherman Hee, Executive

Director of the Hawai'i Conference Foundation, will retire on July 31 after more than 10 years of service to the Foundation and Conference. When asked to reflect on his time with the Foundation, Sherman shared, "This is the first assignment I've ever had that made me happy. Everything I do is focused on making someone else's life better." In his retirement, he is looking forward to having more time to spend with his grandchildren and family, traveling, and enjoying some well-deserved rest.

Tracy Barnowe, Minister for Church Vitality, has left the Conference staff. She began her ministry with the Conference in September 2018 and was serving in a temporary full-time position. Many may know her as the Conference staff person overseeing the b1 project. Kristen Young, part-time Social Media Coordinator and Coordinator for Youth and Young Adult Ministries in the Hawai'i Conference, has assumed responsibility for the b1 project.



Tracy Barnowe

During this time of transition, the Conference staff will do their best to ensure seamless service to our Associations and local churches, while preparing for the ministry of the settled Conference Minister, **David Popham**. He and his wife **Kerrie** arrive mid-September.

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policies and procedures to ensure safety for all in the workplace. It took bold leadership to begin changing workplace cultures and attitudes so that sexual harassment and abuse would not be tolerated. Resources were shared with attendees to encourage churches to be safe places and to support those who have been abused.

Aileen Trout, Pastor of Lahuioakalani Ka'anapali Congregational Church, who has worked with developing Micronesian churches on Maui, commented on the well-attended Micronesian Ministry workshop: "It documented the history of New England and Hawaiian Christians spreading Christianity in Micronesia beginning in 1852. Today, we see the fruits of their labors in the large communities of faith in the islands: Kosraeans, Pohnpeians, Marshallese, Chuukese, and Yapese. Many of these faith communities share worship spaces with Hawai'i Conference churches. Our churches need more information about working with these communities in the present than one workshop could provide."

Highlights from the Website

Go to www.hcucc.org to read many more stories from around the Conference.

Pastoral Changes

Margaret (Meg) Watson began her ministry as Pastor of Waiola Church in Lahaina, Maui, on July 1.

Reflections of General Synod, continued from page 3

just worshipping the good Lord that gave us the Spirit to do the works he had set for us to do. A true spiritual and enlightening moment is what I would call it. —John Narruhn

I especially enjoyed Karen Georgia Thompson's journey as a young child to where she is today. It touched my heart... Congratulations, Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, for being duly elected to serve as the next Associate General Minister of

Educational Intensives and the deliberations of the proposed resolution by adding my wisdom and Hawaiian views on this matter by standing up and speaking out during a plenary session regarding a resolution on styrofoam and plastic use. —Kerisa Carmelo

Opening worship and our first plenary were amazing experiences. I just had to take some time to reflect in wonder and awe of the enormity of our UCC Church. I

Conference Calendar of Events

August 10
Conference Council
and Foundation Trustees

August 16
Admissions Day
(Office closed)

August 17
AHEC Board

August 22
HCUCC Committee
on Ministry

August 24
Formation Missional Team

September 2
Labor Day (Office closed)

September 7
Tri-Isle Mokupuni

September 14
Tri-Isle Boundary Training

September 15
Settled Conference Minister
David Popham begins



Hawai'i Conference UCC Delegation

the UCC's Wider Church Ministries! — Linda Ka'auwai Iwamoto

Worship remains central to the life of the United Church of Christ. I was especially moved by the "Night Prayer at General Synod" on Monday, June 24, 2019, because of the gentle presence of the Spirit. Sharon Lee MacArthur, Interim Pastor at Community Church of Honolulu, was effective in reminding us about the theme for the gathering – "Shine!" —Kealahou Alika

The highlight of the GS was being able to actively participate in my committee's

can still hear this entire body gathered in one large room – singing in ONE accord. —Florentino Cordova

I represented the HCUCC as a Member in Discernment. As a Micronesian and a member of the First United Protestant Church of Hilo, "Mahalo" to HCUCC for the opportunity to be part of relationship and collaboration and what the UCC stands for. Next General Synod in 2021... Kansas City, here I come. —Nixon Jack

On just about every issue that comes up in the news and more, the UCC has taken a stance, standing with the oppressed and the marginalized. Sometimes I wonder if I love the UCC because it works toward "a just world for all" or if the reason I desire "a just world for all" is because I'm part of the UCC. It's gotta be both. —Kristen Young

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'uauu Ave., Honolulu, HI 96817.



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Ka Papa Ho'olālā

Young Adult Fellowship

BY KRISTEN YOUNG

After the closing of the 197th 'Aha Pae'āina, a small group of us hiked to the top of Diamond Head Crater, then headed down to the beach where we shared ourselves, our faith, and hopes over a meal. Young adults had been invited to gather in various events as

part of the 'Aha Pae'āina and though only a few were able to participate, those of us present representing three different churches and islands strengthened our connections with each other and to our Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ.

*At right:
Kristen Young
(UCC Judd),
Telsin Kephias
and Venlee
Jackson
(Lāna'i Union
Church),
Wryen Keoki
Kiwaha
(Puka'ana
Congregational
Church) at the
top of Diamond
Head Crater.*



A Reflection

BY WRYEN KEOKI KIWAHA,
PUKA'ANA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

God's plan requires us to do things we don't normally do and go places we haven't gone before. Life's journey is an uphill climb. Getting to the promised land is tough and we will be tested physically, emotionally, spiritually. But as long as we remember that Christ is the source of our strength, walks with us on this journey, and will never leave us alone, getting there may be difficult, but it is possible. Praise be to the God of journeys. Praise be to the God of unlimited possibilities.



On Sunday we worshiped in different local churches then met for lunch where we were joined by other youth and young adults from Filipino United Church of Christ.