

January 2025 Outlook Interim Pastor Chris' article

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” —Jeremiah 29: 11, N.R.S.V.

Dear Members and Friends of Waipahu United Church of Christ,

As I complete my ministry of 17 months as the Interim Pastor, I highlight photographs taken during the past month which in this case is December 2024. These include:

1. Mike Minakawa placing a purple parament on the sanctuary cross for the liturgical season of Advent (12/6/24). The color changes to a white parament on the First Sunday after Christmas.



2. Joyce Felmet lights the candles on December 8, the Second Sunday of Advent as Mark Felmet does the advent readings (not pictured except for his hand).



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The Committal service for Leona Urata

was held on December 26, 2024 at Hawaiian Memorial Park. She is survived by her husband Glenn, her daughter and son-in-law Kristen and Dustin Nakamoto and two grandchildren, Ian and Yuki Nakamoto.

The Memorial service for Marlene Yasuda

a long-standing member of Waipahu UCC will be on Saturday, January 25, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. here in the church sanctuary. The Yasuda's have been an important part of Waipahu UCC with Paul Yasuda passing away on 6/6/2016 and Amy Sakuma on 9/4/2018.

3. Ruth Oshiro does “Sitting T’ai-Chi” with her daughter Roberta doing “Standing T’ai-Chi” in the T. Yoshida Community Center (12/09/24).



4. Stephanie Liu Antonio and daughter Hailey (nursing student at Creighton University) prior to the start of worship (12/15/24).



5. Wilfred Liu lights the candles on December 15, the Third Sunday of Advent as Jane Liu does the advent reading.



6. Hawaii Conference UCC Minister, the Rev. Dr. David Popham does a reading for the Blue Christmas Service at Ewa Community Church UCC (Kahu Rennie Mau is pictured to the left) on December 18 (Waipahu UCC’s interim pastor also participated)



7. Maurice Morita lights the candles on December 22, the Fourth Sunday of Advent as Angelica Caicedo does the advent reading.



8. Waipahu UCC Administrative Assistant Cecile Goo and Aged to Perfection Manager Angelica Caicedo were invited to share in a lunch hosted in David’s Den by Doug Tom after the class was held on 12/23/24.



9. George Chinen lights the candles on December 24, the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service as Mary Ann Chinen does the advent reading.



10. An invitation was extended to anyone wishing to light a Candle of Remembrance during the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. Mark Felmet assisted Pastor Chris with the candles.



11. Leatrice Sakuma and Joyce Felmet who helped to put up the Christmas decorations in the sanctuary stand with Emi Kitashiro



who was the long-standing Sunday School Superintendent at Waipahu UCC and attended the 12/24/24 candlelight service.

12. Lan Yoneda (worship leader) stands with Richard Tsuchiya and Sonny Liu (ushers) with Ikaika Lenchanko (music leader) on the last Sunday of 2024, December 29.



The Old Testament Prophet Jeremiah included these words from Jeremiah 29:11 in his letter to the Exiles during the Babylonian Captivity of 70 years. These words of the plans God has for the people held captive are also words of encouragement for all of us at Waipahu United

Church of Christ. The church has struggled and now the Rev. Daniel Kidder-McQuown has been called as the Designated Term Pastor. As he begins in February, the church will be invited to join him in his ministry of revitalizing a church like ours with his skills in helping similar churches.

In a recent conversation I had with the Rev. Dr. Charles Buck, former Hawaii Conference UCC Minister who now is President/CEO of United Church Funds, this path of calling a Designated Term Pastor for 1 Year is the current accepted practice of churches in the UCC including at the national level. As success is experienced, additional years can be added to the call.

There are three thoughts I want to leave you with:

First, whenever I see you, whenever I think of Waipahu United Church of Christ, I will always be **“Thankful.”** Your ministry as a disciple of Jesus Christ and your friendship and love for me will long be remembered. I very much **“Appreciated”** being invited to be the Interim Pastor!

Second, **“Life Goes On”** as each month, there will be new digitals that are pictured in this monthly Outlook newsletter depicting the worship services, work days and other events of the church. As Jeremiah wrote, God has plans for our well being, our welfare and not for our demise or our harm. So we must continue to either *“pass the torch”* or *“receive the torch”* as the ministry of Christ continues here.

Third, as we have just celebrated the season of giving and receiving gifts, let us always **“Have Hope.”** In 1 Corinthians 13:13 where the Apostle Paul spoke of the three gifts of faith, hope and love (yes, the greatest is love) remember that HOPE points us in the direction of the future. And this is what all of us are thinking and praying about, *“the future of Waipahu UCC.”*

Much Aloha,

Chris Eng, Interim Pastor

THE CHURCH COUNCIL

Happy New Year Everyone!

I hope you had a great Christmas and Holiday Season! Our Church's Christmas Eve candlelight service was simply beautiful! We had 60 worshippers in attendance, and everyone had smiles on their faces.

We had two Congregational meetings in December. One on the 1st and the last one on the 22nd. For both meetings we had a quorum, and all measures passed. Hooray!

Your Church's finances are in good shape! For eleven months ended November 30, 2024, we had expenses exceeding income by \$23,315.56. It was earlier projected that in all of 2024, expenses would exceed income by \$122,616.28. It looks like we will be significantly under this projected loss by 12/31/24. Praise God!

As we enter this New Year, we will be seeing Pastor Chris moving on in life. We wish him well in whatever undertaking is in store for him and his family. We will see our new designated Pastor, the Reverend Daniel John Kidder-McQuown, begin his journey with WUCC on February 1, 2025. We will all have to work together to make sure that this transition goes smoothly and cooperate with Pastor Dan when he calls upon us for assistance.

The Pastoral Relations Committee has added Clarence Nishihara and Heidi Pagaragan to fill open positions. Continuing on will be Yolanda and Eddie. Elmer Pagaragan has volunteered to serve on the Board of Trustees and Lynn Yamauchi has volunteered to serve as Financial Secretary, which is a position that has been open for some time. Rene Arellano volunteered to serve on the Deacons Board. Theodora Yoneda volunteered to serve on Christian Education Board. Felisa Chang and Ann Nakamura volunteered to serve on the Personnel Committee. We welcome and appreciate everyone wishing to help our Church. I urge all of you who are not currently serving on any Committee or Board in 2024 to at least consider volunteering and trying to assist your Church in 2025.

I hope you are as optimistic about 2025 as I am. As a Church, a State and a Nation, we will all be facing changes.

Have a Blessed and Safe New Year!

Sincerely,
Mark H. Felmet-Moderator

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Aloha,

The BOT signed new contracts with Erbe's to do the janitorial services for the Sanctuary, Pohnpei Ministry to do janitorial services for the Social Hall and Glenn Ancheta to do yard work. The BOT refused the API Security offer. Signs for the dumpster and the children's playground were ordered. The BOT welcomed Elmer Pagaragan as a new board member.

Ray Goya, Chair

EVENTS & MEETINGS



Sundays at 9:30 am	Sunday School
Sat. Jan. 11 at 8:30am	Church Workday
at 9:30 am	BOD/BCED mtg
Wed. Jan. 15	Annual Report Due
Sun. Jan. 19 at 10:30 am	BOT meeting
Sun. Jan. 26 at 10:30 am	Council Meeting
Sat. Feb. 1	Outlook Article due
Sun. Feb. 23 at 10:30 am	Annual Congregational Meeting

BOARD OF DEACONS

This month's article is one of sincere gratitude for the volunteers of Waipahu United Church of Christ. There will be 5 members on the Waipahu UCC **Board of Deacons (BOD)** for the year **2025**. They are **Rene Arellano, Joyce Felmet, Mike Minakawa, Heidi Pagaragan, and Leatrice Sakuma**.

Pastor Chris Eng has mentioned the 3T's of Time, Talent, and Treasure: gifts given by God which we may share as part of our Stewardship. Thank you, **Etta Minakawa**, for sharing your gifts, and making a difference in the team work of the **2024 BOD**. **Etta** has been a BOD member for many years, and is taking a break. She used her gifts of Talent: her organization, her humor, and her ability to solve problems. She also used her skills of knitting and crocheting to help raise funds for the church. **Etta** used her gifts of Time to help keep our Sanctuary clean and polished for Sunday Worship Services.

Thank you, **Worship Leaders for 2024: Mark Felmet, Yolanda Hernandez, Jenny Kojima, Mike Minakawa, Mitchell Neth, Lynn Nishihara, Heidi Pagaragan, and Lan Yoneda**. These lay readers guided us through the "Call to Worship", the "Announcements", and the "Scripture Reading" each Sunday. They would also encourage us to share our gifts of Treasure by asking the Ushers to pass around the Offertory bowls for our donations. **These monetary donations are very helpful for our church to survive**. Also, thank you to **Cecile Goo**, Waipahu UCC Administrative Assistant, who arranged for substitute Worship Leaders.

Mitchell Neth is no longer a lay reader but has answered God's Call. Mitchell was ordained **Reverend Mitchell Neth** in 2024. His new church, the Pohnpei Waipahu UCC Church, uses our Tokuo Yoshida Community Center for their Sunday Services held at 10:30 a.m. They are blessed and grateful to use the Micronesian language to conduct their services.

Thank you to our **Ushers, who also served as Greeters: Mark Felmet, Sonny (Wilfred) Liu, Mike Minakawa, Clarence Nishihara, and Richard Tsuchiya**. They opened up the Sanctuary for our Sunday

Worship Services, passed out Sunday bulletins, and rang the church bell, calling us to gather for worship each Sunday. And when needed, they passed out and collected Congregation ballots and Candlelight candles.

The Ushers also kept a count of attendance for Sunday Worship Service. **Church attendance is a statistic that is important when evaluating the success of our church**.

Finally, I want to express appreciation for the faithful work of **Etta Minakawa, Mike Minakawa, Heidi Pagaragan, and Leatrice Sakuma**. They took turns working with Pastor Chris in fulfilling the Sacrament of Holy Communion. And **Heidi** gets another thank you, for making sure there were refreshments on Holy Communion Sundays. Joyce Felmet, Chair

MARMALADE AND DISHWASHING SCRUBBERS:

On Sunday, December 22nd the Church sold 36 jars of kumquat marmalade made by Ethel Yamaguchi, a former member of Waipahu UCC. Since moving into town, she has been attending Nu'uaniu Congregational Church. We are so grateful Ethel continues to remember Waipahu UCC. This year she had a bumper kumquat crop.

We also sold 14 dishwashing scrubbers made by Barbara Tanji, a Waipahu UCC member. We are so grateful people remember to help Waipahu UCC.

With the help of Felisa Chang and Clarence Nishihara selling the marmalade and scrubbers before the church service, the Church made a total of \$237.00. Included were donations of \$7.00 from buyers, who said "keep the change". Thank you so much!

B.C.E. - BITS

“The Twelve Days of Christmas”

Christmas day isn't the end of the celebration of the Birth of Christ. The Christian history follows what is known as the Liturgical Calendar year. There are 6 sacred celebrations that are recognized throughout the calendar year.

The 25 days of Advent is the first season then followed by Christmastime where the celebrations and activities actually begins on the 25th of December and ends on the 5th of January.

Then on the Liturgical Calendar, Epiphany begins on the 6th of January. This is to celebrate the significance of the Birth of Christ. Epiphany is a Greek word meaning “appearance” or “manifestation”, the coming of the Magi from the east to see the Christ child is but one event.

Six months between Advent and Pentecost is where most festivals occurred it's the time to concentrate on the workings and the life of Christ. Then the other six months between Pentecost and Advent is the time to concentrate on the teachings and the applications of those teachings of Christ.

The Christian Liturgical Calendar will see Advent; Christmas; Epiphany; Lent; Holy Week; and Easter. For all, the most important days are the “Lord's Day”, The first Sundays of the week and the first Sunday of the month for the “Lord's Supper”.

(credit/ref. Holman's Bible Dirctionary)

SOCIAL ACTION COMMITTEE

ANGEL TREE PROJECT. The Social Action Committee once again participated in the Angel

Tree Project for children of incarcerated individuals through the Prison Fellowship. We were assigned 20 children and through the overwhelming generosity of our church members and several Aged to Perfection participants, we collected a total of \$1,415.00. Wow!! This allowed us to give each of the children a \$50 Walmart gift card as well as a blanket and M&Ms candy canes. A couple of the gifts were picked up at the church, but the majority of the gifts were delivered to families living in Waipahu, Pearl City, Mililani, Wahiawa, and Iroquois Point in Ewa Beach. Each gift also contained a written message on an angel from their incarcerated parent.

A couple of the heartwarming texts received after delivery of the gifts read:
“Thank you so much!!! God bless you all. I truly appreciate it!! The children will be very excited and also blessed to have a beautiful message from their dad.”

“Thank you so much! I appreciate everyone at the church! Thank you for taking the time to deliver the gifts to my family and I. Jesus is the reason for the season. God is good!”

From these messages, it is evident that each contributor made a difference to these families! Your generosity helped immensely towards brightening the lives of these children.
MAHALO!



We Turn to God in Prayer

We will print the names of those in need of prayer. If you suggest a name, please be sure that you have secured their permission for doing so and **make sure to contact the church office when the name should be removed. If not, the name will be removed after one month.**

Continual Prayers for Members

Judy Hayashida
Irene Nomura
Sam Luna
Elmer Pagaragan
Ludivico Pagaragan
Remedios Pagaragan
Barney Shiraishi
Mae Shiraishi
Mary Ann Chinen
Wayne Oshiro
George Nakamura
The families of
John Desaegher
Leona Urata
Marlene Yasuda

Family of Members

Linda Felmet
Virginia Phillips
Hinano Felmet
Swago(Howard) Jackson
Doreen Brown
Elyssa P. Batalon
Elisea Garcia
Marlon Garcia
Ethel Yamaguchi
Kevin Jahangiri (Clarence)
Noelani Coreen-Hobbs (pastor)

Church Friends

Jo Fay Umbhau
Russ Robertson
Morris Stoebner
Adeline Aniya
Ambrose Velsaco
Sachi Aoki
Joy Wilson
Sharon Ohara (pastor)
Gail Schmidt

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