

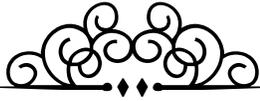


Nu 'Oli

GLAD TIDINGS WAIOLA CHURCH'S Pastoral Letter

Pepeluai 2017

January 2017



WAIOLA CHURCH

(United Church of Christ)

535 Wainee Street
Lahaina, HI 96761

Phone/ Fax: 808.661.4349
waiolaucc@waiolachurch.com

Interim Minister:
Kahu Dennis Alger

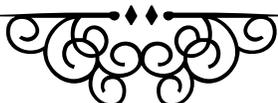
Lay Minister:
Kahu Anela Rosa

Moderator:
Grale Lorenzo-Chong

Weekly Worship:
Sundays @ 9am

Sunday School:
Sundays @ 9:15am

Office Hours:
M, W-F 8am - 2pm



Nu 'Oli / Glad Tidings *FROM* Kahu Dennis

Mango Blossom Greetings to
Members and Friends Of Waiola UCC

The January blossoms offer a promise of midwinter fruit. Soon na manako will be falling all over the place. Such is Lahaina, so blessed with produce of the earth.

As I write, we are preparing for the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, preceded by installation of newly-elected Board members. The new Board will determine positions of moderator, vice moderator, treasurer and secretary. Please support these persons in leadership with your prayers and general helpfulness. Coming up in a few weeks is the reception of six new members, one of which has been an associate member for some years. Please welcome them and determine ways in which their skills and yours are utilized in furthering the mission of the church. In addition, we now have a Transition/Search Committee in place. I will be working with that team in order to engage the broader congregation in some more transition conversations, in order to be better prepared for developing the congregational profile and the subsequent steps toward finding your next kahu. Again, please pray for and otherwise support these efforts.

I just mentioned to someone that I was formulating a piece on ecclesiology. Of course you use that term on a daily basis—well, probably not that word, but the concept of church. You all have convictions about what “being church” entails. For some, the faith community exists to both afflict the powerful and comfort the afflicted, engaging with like-minded colleagues in sociopolitical actions. For others, the community exists to proclaim the gospel of salvation through Christ, with each person living that out in his/her own way. Of course there are many variations within each perspective.

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In the segregated church of my youth, one in which I was taught about pacifism as well as global mission, the preacher often got red in the face in his rants about our sinful personal nature. Outside the pulpit I experienced his gentle and nurturing side. In the church of my early adulthood, I was confronted by the forthright expression of righteous indignation regarding corporate systems of injustice, corruption in government, racism, and so on. Notice the shift from the personal to the corporate? We all fall short of our call as disciples and this shows up in systems of oppression; these realities become the norm, despite their harm to societies, persons, and the environment, and tend to diminish life for the voiceless. It is business as usual. My ecclesiology says that the church exists, as Matthew 25: 31-46 Christians: *..for I was hungry... Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these...you did it to me.*, to be on God's side in working for equality, generosity, and faithfulness through love. As Paul writes, we can do all the right things, but without love it matters little. Obligation is shallow.

Throughout much of our Protestant history, we have been taught to be Matthew 28:19-20 Christians: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.* This was followed by the well-known John 3: 16, *For God so loved the world...that whosoever believes in him will have everlasting life.* Go back and read these verses and the surrounding passages and see how they enhance or clarify your ecclesiology.

The Epistle of James proclaims that faith without works is dead; Paul says we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We are given various biblical injunctions regarding the role of faith in daily life as social creatures within a context that is anything but utopian. So we all struggle with what it means to be authentic Christians in our place and time. We endeavor to know the difference between “believing in” and “believing into” the beloved community through which we receive salvation through grace.

At some point, your search committee just might say to a candidate, “Tell us about your ecclesiology.” Unless the candidate so seldom uses the term that she/he needs to ponder what you mean by the question, the response will probably be as multifaceted as the above. And this is because we are convinced that we must be humble in our complex and diverse society. We learned that others have insights of great significance; we take seriously Jesus statement (John 10:16) of having *other sheep not of this fold*. So, even though we are Christian by birth, later choice, or daily recommitment, we want to keep our hearts open to the conviction of Separatist/Pilgrim Kahu John Robinson (1576-1625), *I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of his Holy Word.* So, too, do we take heed from Luke 18: 26-27 *Those who heard it [the “eye of a needle” comment] said, “Then who can be saved?” He replied, “What is impossible for mortals is possible for God.”* In other words, be humble and open to new understanding and revelation by the Spirit—because the Holy Spirit didn't retire after Pentecost.

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In addition to this brief “academic” exploration of ecclesiology, it is important to consider who/what/how the church is to be in the midst of a conflicted society. M. Craig Barnes, President of Princeton Theological Seminary, has written a thoughtful piece in *Christian Century* (January 4, 2017), titled “The Pastors I Worry About.” To be true to the content, I will quote fairly extensively.

The pastors I fret over the most are those whose congregations are divided in their political allegiances. These churches pride themselves on being a place where all types of diversity are held together by a common center in Christ. “The center will always hold,” pastors have said for years. “We don’t have to worry about what divides us.” But this last election revealed that we have never been a centered country; congregations had better be worried about what divides them....

If a politically diverse congregation is paying attention, it realizes that the inauguration...tears at its understanding of the church’s mission. Some members will continue to advocate for the church to care for the poor, the marginalized, and the uninsured, and will provide hospitality to the stranger in its midst. Others will say the time has come for the church to do its part in making America great again, whatever that means.

In this stark conflict the pastor stands in the pulpit struggling to say something that’s both unifying and prophetic....it is very difficult to preach to a divided “us.”

This goes to the heart of the pastor’s calling....Our calling has always been to proclaim the gospel for our life together. So what does it mean to be the pastor-preacher who has taken a vow to love everyone in the congregation in such a divisive time?

What does it mean for a pastor to have convictions that conflict with those in the pews who are listening to a sermon?

...“The goal,” I now tell my students at the seminary, “is to preach into the cultural divisions in a way that transcends the competing political platforms.”

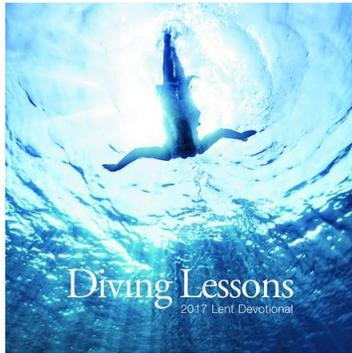
But there are times when a preacher has to echo Luther in saying, “Here I stand; I can do no other. God help me.” This is one of those times. No pastor should remain silent at the election of a president who has deceived the working class with empty promises, and who is clearly misogynist, Islamophobic, an advocate of racist stop-and-frisk policing. He wants to build walls around the country rather than offer hospitality to the stranger. All of that is anathema to the gospel of Jesus Christ’s love for a world he was literally dying to love.

So I stay awake at night praying for the pastor who has to figure out how to say this to a congregation that believes Jesus is the Lord of life, but that says, please, don’t talk about politics. (p.35)

Faithfulness, the multifaceted manifestation of our holy calling, awaits us now.

■ *Rahu Dennis*

LOOKING to LENT



BIBLE STUDY DURING LENT

Funny thing about Bible Study: it is always difficult to schedule. However, we will figure it out. Jen has ordered materials from the UCC Stillspeaking Writers group for daily devotions. I used a similar resource two years ago and found it useful. As you know, we have some terrific writers in the UCC. Plan to join us. Ash Wednesday is coming soon, March 1. I suggest we meet after brunch on Sundays for discussion and contemplation of the materials.

Good Friday at Waiola

Continuing the ecumenical tradition of a shared service during Holy Week, our neighbors from Holy Innocents Episcopal and Lahaina United Methodist will join us for this somber observance on April 14th. Na kahu Amy and Paul will be meeting with me soon to begin the planning. Alert: you might be asked to help.

Lenten Schedule

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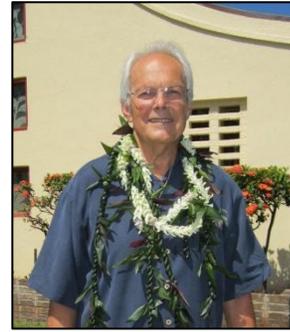
Lenten Season Calendar

- March 1 Ash Wednesday
 - Waiola @ 7pm
 - April 9 Palm Sunday
 - Waiola @ 9am
 - April 13 Maundy Thursday
 - Waiola @ 7pm
 - April 14 Good Friday
 - Waiola @ 7pm
 - April 15 Holy Saturday
 - No Services
 - April 16 Easter Sunrise
 - Waiola @ 6:30am
- Easter Service
- Waiola @ 9am



WORSHIP IN THE NEW TRADITION

By Kahu Dennis Alger



Sometimes it helps to stop and ponder the “whys” of the way we organize our worship. There really is a flow to it; look at the formats in the front of the New Century Hymnal to see how similar our services are. Similar in that, for one, we start with a summoning of the people to a time of worship, followed by an upbeat hymn. It is a moving/enthusiastic piece because our worship is “a witness to the Resurrection.” Think about that. Without the Easter proclamation we have nothing to celebrate, no hope to share. So we sing: “Nu ‘Oli!,” “Mele La’i,” “The Church’s One Foundation,” “Hosanna Nui ‘Ia Iesu.” Yep, for funerals, too.

Further, somewhere along the line, depending on one’s preference, we have a time of confession and assurance (I won’t get into the options here). The homily follows the Scripture for the purpose of expanding upon the message and connecting the ancient witness with current realities. The offering is a response to the message, a recommitment of our energies and resources. Of course, communion is a response to the homily’s invitation as well; so is baptism.

Joys & Concerns, Children’s Time, reception of new members, commissioning, and other aspects fit in at different times, as do those necessary nuisances we call announcements. Prayers are numerous and focused—from invocation to benediction/blessing. Prayer hymns and other music during the service will often be more reflective, quiet, reassuring, even meditative, such as “In the Bulb there Is a Flower,” “Blessed Assurance,” “Ua Ho’opa’a Au E Iesu,” “Iesu No Ke Kahuhipa,” “Ekolu Mea Nui,” and “Won’t You Let Me Be Your Servant?”

Then comes the closing hymn, often reflecting encouragement after the inspiration already experienced. It is a recommitment to service, justice, and compassion. By nature, it is upbeat, intending to take us out the doors with renewed courage, as do these, “Hoe Amau!,” “God of Grace and God of Glory,” and “He Kumu Pa’a Loa.”

Consider also that hymns make a theological point by way of a journey through several verses. We miss that emphasis when we try to save time (for what?) by singing 1,3, and 5, for instance. One exception, for me, is “Amazing Grace,” which has an added-on verse that changes the conviction behind verses 1-4. Pau.

WAIOLA *in History*

From Pacific Commercial Advertiser, May 09, 1904

LAHAINA NOTES IN MAUI PAPER

Mr. Boardman, a teacher from California, now stationed at Lanai, took part in the services at the Wainee Church last Sunday.

In about two weeks a Japanese school will be opened at Kaanapali. Mr. Muramatsu is coming to take charge. There will be at least 50 scholars.

Mr. and Mrs. Storm, formerly of Lahaina, had a very pleasant trip to Manila. They stopped over in Japan two weeks, and visited Hongkong. Mr. Storm has secured a good position on an electric road.

At the Wainee Church, a number of meetings have been held this week, by the Sunday School Association, the society of Christian Endeavor, and the Maui, Molokai and Lanai Presbytery or Association of Churches. The Rev. Messrs. O. P. Emerson, Kapu, Timoteo, and several other pastors are present.

Rev. O. P. Emerson has removed from Honolulu to Makawao. Mrs. Emerson is expected from Honolulu next week. It is probable that Mr. and Mrs. Emerson will eventually establish their home at Wailuku.



Waiola Church
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Lahaina, HI 96767

Nu 'Oli *FROM* Waiola

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS	
February 5	New Member Installation
February 12	New Member Installation
February 19	Henry Opukahai'a Worship Service
February 26	New Member Installation
	Transfiguration

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Visit: <http://www.waiolachurch.org/newsletters/nuoli0117.pdf>