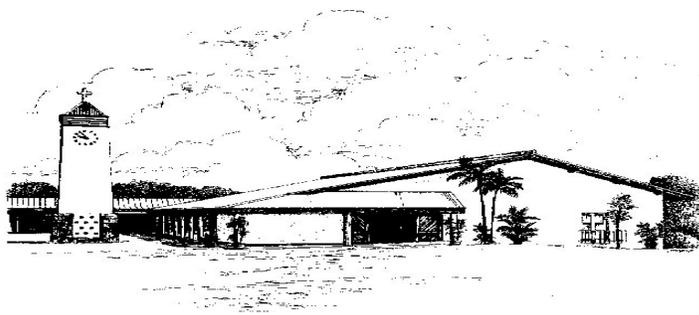


First United Protestant Church-UCC

1350 Waianuenue Avenue
Hilo, HI 96720
808/935-5914
fupchilo@hawaiiantel.net
www.fupchurch.org

Return Service Requested



Welcome to First United Protestant Church Hilo, Hawaii

In this season of Ordinary Time between Pentecost and Advent, we welcome you and your loved ones (including children) to join us as we grow in faith, hope, and love. We are a part of the United Church of Christ and affiliated with the Hawai'i Conference of the UCC. Our roots in Hawai'i are the congregational church of the early missionaries. First United Protestant Church was organized as The First Foreign Church and Society in 1868.

Sunday Worship Service	10:00 am
Communion	First Sunday of the Month
Kosraean Mid-Week Service	7:30 pm Wednesdays
Kosraean WCA Service	7:00 pm Fridays
Kosraean Sunday Worship Service	1:30 pm Sundays

Children's Ministry offered during worship Service
Other education, youth programs, and activities offered throughout the week.
Weekly schedules are listed in the Sunday worship bulletin.

This is a place to BELONG... We're all in this together. No matter our history, circumstances, or goals, we're all human and all need love and acceptance. That's why the church exists—and why you belong.

December 2014

FIRST NEWS – NEWSLETTER OF FIRST UNITED PROTESTANT CHURCH, HILO, HI

DECEMBER 2014

Themes for December

December 7, 2014 **Finding God in the Wilderness**

Mark 1.1-8, Isaiah 40.1-11

Are you living in a wilderness? Have the circumstances of your life led you to a place of dryness and hunger, fear and confusion? It was in the wilderness that God's good news was first announced. It was in the wilderness that Jesus went to commune with God before his mission. It was in the wilderness that Paul spent three years before preaching his first sermon. A wilderness is a place of mystery and self-awareness, and when we come out of the wilderness, we are never the same. God always finds us in the wilderness and leads us through to a place of healing and security.

December 14, 2014 **Its About Time**

Luke 1.26-38. 46-56

There are two words for "time" in the Bible. One is 'chronos' having to do with the measuring of seconds, minutes, hours and days. Its specific and predictable. The other word is 'kairos' and has nothing to do with predictability. Kairos is about the 'right time'... the moment that is ripe for action or a decision. The Christmas story is all about 'kairos' time... when the moment was 'right', God entered human history in the tangible form of a child born of a young woman named Mary. Living our lives according to 'kairos' time can mean taking a risk, embracing change, getting out of our comfort zones, acting on faith, relinquishing control over the outcome, learning patience.

December 21, 2014 **St. Nicholas a.k.a. Santa Claus**

Isaiah 9.2, 6-7

In 245 a.d. in Patara on the Mediterranean Sea, there lived a man named Nicholas, son of a very wealthy merchant. His story is one of gracious generosity toward the needy and the forgotten. In time, he became St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, and lived the rest of his life giving his wealth away. It's a story of grace and mercy, healing love and unconditional acceptance. Grace is the golden quality of cutting another person some slack when they blow it, making room for imperfection, giving each other space to be fully human. Grace is at the heart of the Christmas story... right down to the jolly man in the red suit.

December 24, 2014 **Christmas Eve Service**

6:00 p.m.

Seeing Christmas With Fresh Eyes

December 28, 2014 **A Post-Christmas Reality Check**

Matt. 2.13-23

Jesus started life as a homeless refugee in a foreign land, his life the target of a madman king. He had only two parents to love and care for him. And a God who was there in the uncertainty and insecurity of his young life. When life makes you a refugee in your own world... rootless, homeless, insecure, afraid, pained by the injustices and inequities, remember that God is there with you. This story is a Reality Check. It isn't pretty but it is real life. God has come to live with us in the midst of our pain and losses. It's the meaning of the word "Emmanuel" – God With Us!

January 4, 2014 **A New Year's Promise**

Jeremiah 29.10-14

Tuesday of this week begins the season of "Epiphany" – a word that means "a revelation, or revealing by the light". When we find ourselves in a dark space, unsure of tomorrow and unable to reclaim yesterday, we live by faith. The Hebrew people lived in a very dark space that was full of fear and threats from their enemies. God made a promise to them about their future, the same promise that's offered to us: "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." At the beginning of a New Year, questions come and maybe fears and doubts. Listen to God's promise – "I will give you a future with hope". What could that possibly mean? Let's think it through together...

THINKING OUT LOUD...

Last week, we took our visiting family to our favorite seaside perch at the end of Maku'u in Hawaiian Paradise Park. We've enjoyed watching sunrises there, feeling the fresh winds and listening to the roaring waves. We had not been there since the August storms. It made us sad to see the majestic tall trees toppled to the ground in every direction, their roots sticking up into the air. I noticed that on these trees, the root systems were not deep but quite shallow. Limbs were shattered, leaves had fallen and these trees were growing gray and white with death.

There were other tall trees there, still standing despite the same winds that had toppled the fallen trees. I suspected that the roots of the trees still standing went deeper, winding around rocks as they penetrated deeper into the earth. The leaves on these trees were green and vibrant, the limbs strong and healthy. These trees had an inner source of nourishment from deep within the earth.

The scene evoked a mixture of sadness but also gratitude. And it spoke to me about roots and the hidden sources of nourishment that keep us healthy and growing. Root systems are usually invisible, below ground, out of sight. Like much of my "root system"... that which feeds me and nourishes me is not easily visible to anyone else. Some of the nourishing sources include times of reflection, reading, prayer, meaningful conversation, refreshing play, managing energy and taking a nap when I'm sleepy. This is mostly private and personal.

Storms come. They always do. Storms tend to expose our root systems. During times of stress, failure, discouragement or loss, roots become all-important. Where we draw our nourishment to sustain our inner spirits and give us strength during those times becomes critical. The scene prompted me to think through the people and activities that truly feed my spirit and nourish my heart and soul.

In this Thanksgiving week, I give thanks to all those who pray for us, who love us through stressful times, who walk with us through difficult passages, who make us laugh and who listen without judgment. I give thanks for the soul-feeding writings of my favorite authors that inspire and instruct. I am thrilled by the gift of family... children and grandchildren, a loving, creative and generous wife, and YOU. You all are so supportive and kind... encouraging and willing to walk together with us on this journey.

God bless you all with abundant nourishment of heart and soul this Christmas season...

Pastor Ron



Did you Know...

- That our Prayer Corner continues to attract those who come with a prayer in their heart for a special need. The tea lights are lit and a moment of silence says that the person has given their requests to God, believing in the mystery of prayer and the power of God to make a difference.
- That two new microphones and a new wireless receiver were added to our church's sound system in November. So far there's been no squeaks, crackles, booms, pops and ear-shattering squawks from the speakers... thanks be to God!
- That work continues on the new church directory. If someone comes up to you and asks to take your photo, it is because we want to include our pictures in the directory. It will be soooo helpful to whomever God sends to us as our pastor... to be able to easily match names and faces.
- That Ethel Fernandez of Hilo crafted the beautiful Magnolia design Hawaiian quilt hanging in the church Narthex? Her over 250,000 handmade stitches reveal her gentleness, beauty and patience. Aunt Ethel was Priscilla Kent's first Hospice patient. She died on June 23, 2001. Her quilt is generously on loan from her niece, Wanda Leopoldino, a member of St. Joseph Catholic Church, who worships with us occasionally.
- That one of our stained glass windows was hit by something (a rock?) that created a three inch hole in the dark purple glass? We are looking for an artisan who works with stained glass. If you are aware of someone, please contact the church office.
- That our organ fund continues to grow with the addition of a \$5000 donation of seed money from our own church funds along with the donations of members and friends through the Organ Donor glass jars and offering envelopes? Keep filling those jars and bring them to church when they're full... then take them home and fill them again! Thank you very much.

Christmas Plans and Program

The changing of the seasons in Hawaii is barely noticeable because of our wonderfully moderate year-round climate. But it's a different story inside the church sanctuary. From the beautiful Cornucopia and Fall flower arrangements of Autumn, we enter the world of Violet and White altar cloths, beautiful window décor, brilliant red Poinsettia plants, Advent Candles and Christmas trees.

Advent began on November 30, the beginning of a new liturgical church year that will take us through Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and back again to Advent. The predictable stories and rhythms of Christmas are comforting and reassuring as we remember the familiar characters and events when God showed us a human face in the person of Jesus Christ. Each Sunday, we'll light another Advent Candle. We'll read a bit more of the Incarnation Story, we'll sing familiar carols.

On Sunday, December 21 we'll stay after worship for our Christmas Luncheon sharing a great meal together (look for the sign-up sheets in the Narthex). On Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24, we'll gather at 6:00 p.m. for the annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service. If the manger, the Christmas star, the swaddling clothes, the gifts of the wise men, the donkey and two sheep could tell the story of Christmas, what would they say? They will all visit us on Christmas Eve to give us a very different "Perspective on Christmas".

Congregational Meeting on November 30 – 2015 Budget, Officers, Council Members and Standing Committee Chairs

On Sunday, November 30, the congregation approved the proposed budget for 2015. In addition, the following members were elected as officers and council members for the coming year. Thanks to everyone who has served so faithfully this past year and for all who have stepped forward to take on the privilege and responsibility of providing leadership for our congregation in the year to come. We received with regret and sadness the resignation of Fay Jack as Clerk due to health challenges and pray for God's healing and strength in her life.

This is our Leadership Team for 2015:

Moderator	Debbie Sasan (2 year term)*
Vice-Moderator	John Wolf (2 year term)*
Clerk	Open
Treasurer	Open
Resource Committee	Bob Ahia (1 year left in term)
Assistant Treasurer	Letitia Agag (2 years left in term)
Portfolio Manager	Open
Youth Representative	Kepola Ishikawa (1 year term)*
Christian Education	Faye Persson (2 year term)*
Christian Service	Rosalind Queja (2 year term)*
Mission	Faemay Queja (2 year term)*
Outreach	Open
Worship	Open
Pastoral Relations	Margo Aguiar (2 year term)*
Members-at-Large	Betty Nekoba, Jane McLean, Rosalind Queja, Sylvia Hammer, Gail Kagawa (1 year term)*

*Newly elected Officers, Council Members and Standing Committee Chairs
November 30, 2014

**Note: The December council meeting will be held after church on
Sunday, Dec. 14th**

Happy December Birthday to Jesus and to the following Friends and Members



Agnes Perriera on her 99th Birthday on October 11th with her 99 + birthday cards!

Joel Alokoa (1st), Aloka Dizon (1st), Tyler Dela Cruz (2nd), Inez Bidad (4th), Mercian Tosie (5th), Froilan Queja (5th), Aloka Jr. Dizon (6th), Josiah & Lehua Hopfe (7th), Herby Albert (8th), Metilda Dale-Bobby (11th), Jonah Kaupu (11th), Mariella Wasserman (13th), Sapel Sephin Shrew (13th), Palikun George (14th), Vivian Magnus (16th), Elsie Shrew (16th), Jusmina Alik (17th), Zandrix Queja (21st), Ryan Castro (22nd), Henry Hackludy Shrew (23rd), TK McGill Tolenna (24th), Katrina Lorenzo (26th), Debbie Sasan (26th), Raella Castro (27th), Marion Mattos (28th)

Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration

It was an amazing evening on Tuesday, November 25 when over 300 people from a wide variety of faith communities gathered in our church sanctuary for an evening of music and refreshments. There were nineteen different communities that took part in the program, either through word or song. The electric energy in the sanctuary was memorable as people from differing belief systems joined together in a spirit of mutual regard, compassion for those who are hurting and gratitude for our many blessings.

Mahalo to all from our church Ohana who helped to make the evening a great success. Debbie Sasan headed up the refreshments crew and made sure everyone had plenty to eat and drink following the Celebration. Carlene Wolf headed up the hospitality crew who offered a warm welcome to all who came, passed out bulletins and made sure everyone had a seat. Bob Ahia headed up the parking crew who made sure that everyone had a place to park in our lot or in the Kaiser Medical Center lot next door. Boy Scout Troop #23 from the Hilo Honpa Hongwanji gave wonderful assistance in this task as well through their flashlights and umbrellas as people walked to and from their cars.

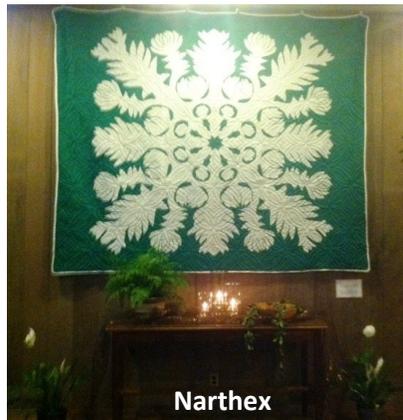
Our program participants included Joanne Pocsidio, Michael Russell and Michael Springer who opened the program with a beautiful rendition of "The Lord Is My Shepherd" and the Kosraean Fellowship who closed the program by filling the front of the church with close to 50 members and sang their hearts out with joyful abandon.

Many guests expressed deep appreciation for all our preparations and hosting of this event. Great Job!!

Interfaith Communities in Action Thanksgiving Celebration



Getting Ready



Narthex



Food Basket Donations



Debbie & Faye



Welcome from Pastor Ron



Helpers & Greeters



Church of the Holy Apostles



Hilo and Puna Hongwanji



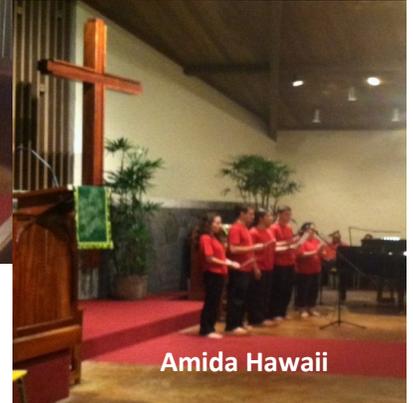
Kosraean Singers



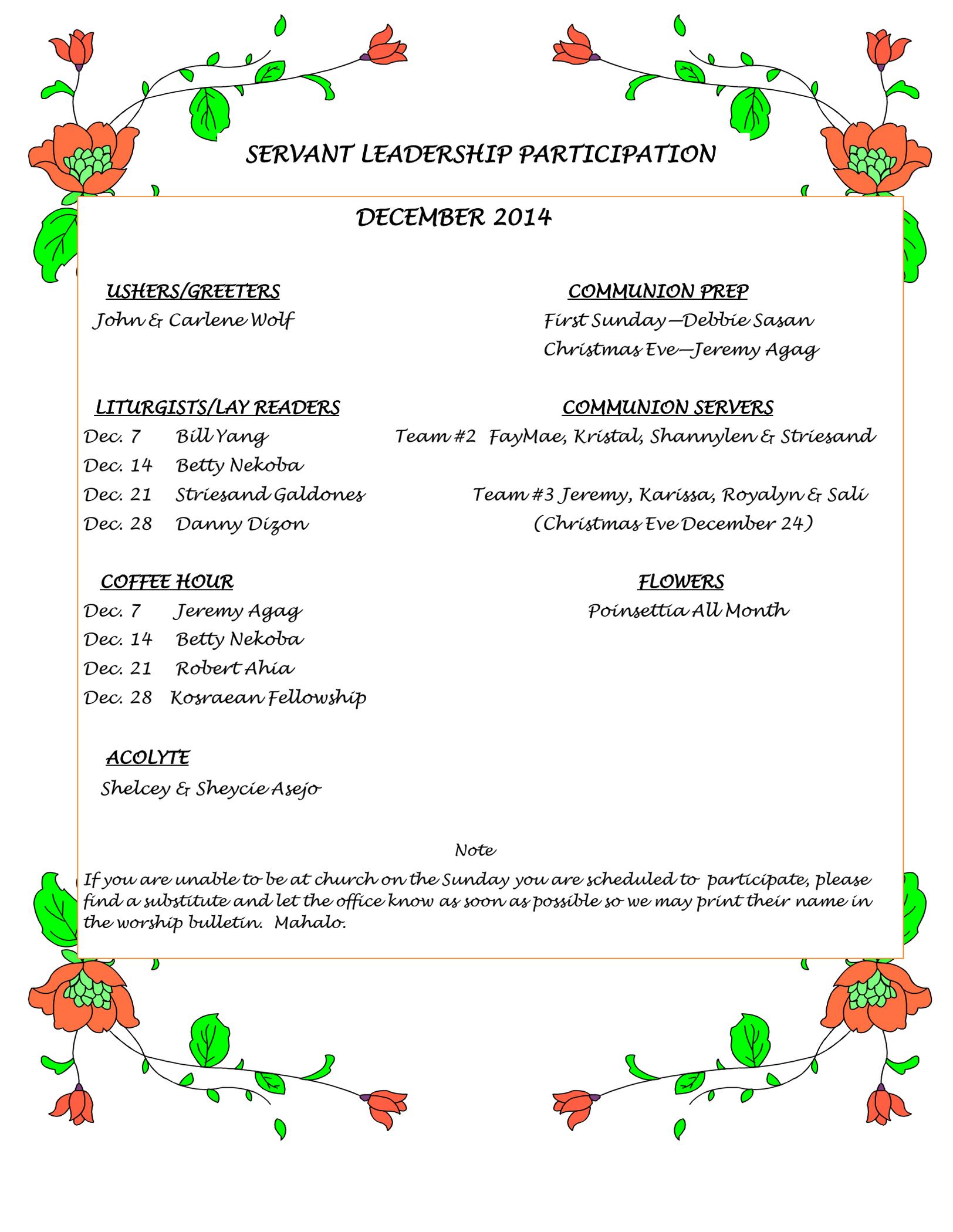
Joanne Pocsidio, Michael Russell & Michael Springer



St. Joseph's Catholic Church Choir



Amida Hawaii



SERVANT LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION

DECEMBER 2014

USHERS/GREETERS

John & Carlene Wolf

COMMUNION PREP

*First Sunday—Debbie Sasan
Christmas Eve—Jeremy Agag*

LITURGISTS/LAY READERS

*Dec. 7 Bill Yang
Dec. 14 Betty Nekoba
Dec. 21 Striesand Galdones
Dec. 28 Danny Dizon*

COMMUNION SERVERS

*Team #2 FayMae, Kristal, Shannylen & Striesand
Team #3 Jeremy, Karissa, Royalyn & Sali
(Christmas Eve December 24)*

COFFEE HOUR

*Dec. 7 Jeremy Agag
Dec. 14 Betty Nekoba
Dec. 21 Robert Ahia
Dec. 28 Kosraean Fellowship*

FLOWERS

Poinsettia All Month

ACOLYTE

Shelcey & Sheycie Asejo

Note

If you are unable to be at church on the Sunday you are scheduled to participate, please find a substitute and let the office know as soon as possible so we may print their name in the worship bulletin. Mahalo.