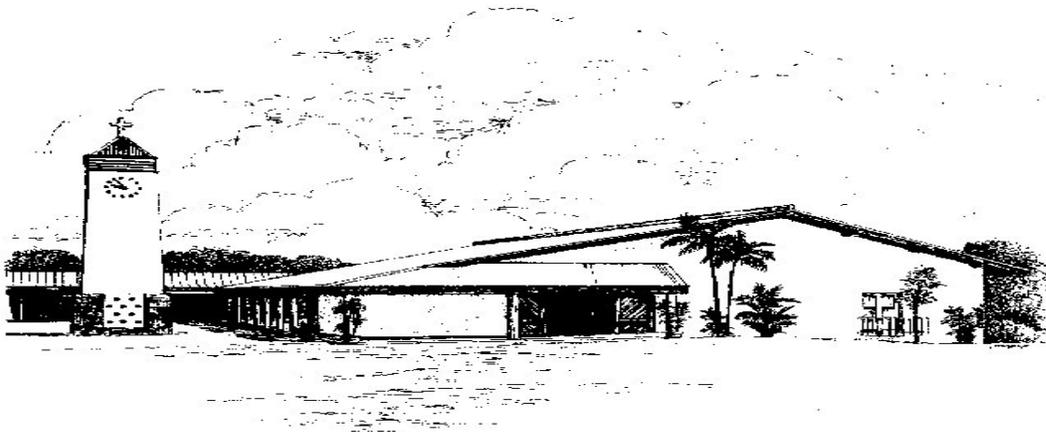


**First United Protestant Church-UCC**

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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**



## **Welcome to First United Protestant Church Hilo, Hawaii**

As we enter this season between Christmas and Easter, 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 Language Bible Study	7:30 pm Wednesdays
Kosraean Language 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.

**Our faith is over two thousand years old...Our thinking is not !  
No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here**

February, 2014

## Themes for Upcoming Sundays

- Feb. 2**      **Spiritual Poverty and the Blessing of God**      **Matt. 5.1-12**  
The Beatitudes are the familiar “blessings” Jesus listed at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. “Blessed are you...” See if you are on this list of those upon whom Jesus named as the “blessed”... I know you’re name is there.
- Feb. 9**      **First Love**      **Revelation 2.1-7**  
At the center of our life together is a relationship of love... that motivates us to care for each other and then moves us to love those outside our walls. Love is the glue that holds us together as a church and it’s the motivation that sends us out with healing energy to those who are hurting.
- Feb. 16**      **Are You Thirsty?**      **Isaiah 55.1-13**  
We are created with a need for water. Without it, we will die. What is true in the realm of the body is true in the realm of the spirit also. Our discontentment and complaining, our restlessness and depression can often be traced to a “soul thirst” that’s not being satisfied. Isaiah’s invitation to drink deeply in the stream of God’s love is for all of us.
- Feb. 23**      **Blindspots and Shadows**      **Luke 6.36-42**  
We all have blind spots when it comes to passing judgment on other people. Its easy to see others’ faults and failures. Its harder to see our own. Most of Jesus’ sermons touched on this issue of judging others and being blind to our own faults and failures. The answer is to be full of mercy and generous with grace.
- March 2**      **Moses Moments**      **Exodus 3.1-15**  
God had a job for Moses to do and Moses said, “No God. I’m too old.” “No God. I’m not qualified.” “No God, it won’t work.” The impossible job was to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and Moses was saying “No” to God. Have you ever had a “Moses moment” when you wanted to run the other direction... but God wouldn’t let you?

## Thinking Out Loud...

Bumper stickers say a lot about who we are, what we believe, our values, priorities, prejudices and wishes. I never put bumper stickers on my car because I'm always open to the possibility that I might change my mind and I don't want to scrape it off. Life is not black and white for me but a wondrous and sometimes confusing rainbow of colors which sometimes clash. "America: Love it or leave it" doesn't give me enough latitude to disagree with the decisions of our leaders.

Some bumper stickers make me smile, like:

"Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine"

"Sometimes I wake up grumpy, other times I let him sleep."

"If we aren't supposed to eat animals, why are they made of meat?"

"Give me ambiguity or give me something else"

"Puritanism: The haunting fear that someone, somewhere may be happy"

"Consciousness: That annoying time between naps"

"There are three kinds of people: Those who can count and those who can't"

"Time is what keeps everything from happening all at once"

Some bumper stickers make me sad or angry. The one about "prying my cold dead fingers from my gun" that anti-gun control advocates like is one of them. Another one is "My kid beat up your honor student". Think about what kind of values and assumptions it would take to put that one on your bumper.

Its scary! It exalts violence over intelligence, might over self-control and applauds injury to a person for superior achievement. It's the kind of thinking that results in kids being ridiculed and bullied by their classmates for trying their best, or reaching for the stars, or doing the extra credit assignment to help their grade. It says that its cool to be mediocre and its shameful to get good grades.

What kind of world would it be if everyone lived by those values? Would you want to live in it? Are there actually people who think that way and are not ashamed to advertise it by putting it on their car bumper?

Finally, there's the bumper sticker that says, "Honk if you love Jesus". Seems like inexpensive love. If you really love Jesus, get involved with a broken and hurting person instead. Volunteer to teach Sunday School. Take on a responsibility in the church. Call an older shut-in. Send an encouraging card or make a phone call to someone going through a difficult time in their life. Ask for forgiveness from someone you've wronged. Be patient when things don't go your way. Speak kindly when it would be easier to be harsh or sarcastic.

"Honk if you love Jesus" is no substitute for the real thing.

Aloha,  
Pastor Ron

# Annual Report for 2013

The church's Annual Report for 2013 is now complete and available for distribution. The annual meeting will be held on Sunday, February 9 following the morning service. The reports may be picked up in the church narthex beginning this Sunday, February 2. ***An important item of business will be the approval and affirmation of the Pastoral Search Committee that will be conducting the search process for our next pastor.*** They need your vote and your support and prayers. Please be sure to come for this important meeting!

## Did You Know...

~That a new baby was born to the family who is renting the church manse? This is the first occasion of a birth of a baby to anyone living in our manse!! Congratulations!

~That we are still receiving newspapers and HI-5 recyclable items in order to support our young friend in the Philippines, Raymark Dela Cruz? We Need Volunteers to help prepare the papers for delivery to Hawaii Tropicals Direct in Kapoho. If you can help, please contact the church office or Pastor Ron.

~That we have caught (and disposed of) several rats in our church buildings? One was in the choir/ storage room and the other was in the organ! We are replacing our old screens with newer 'rat proof' screens and cutting back foliage that serves as a highway for rats to enter our buildings.

~That the Kosraean Fellowship work crew cleared and cleaned much of the property on the mauka side of the church and in the back of our buildings toward the state lands and the river? Mahalo!! Good Job!!

~That the church has a new office computer – a high performance system that is very fast and will allow our current programs such as Quickbooks to run faster and more efficiently?

~That Sunday, January 26, our worship service was devoted to remembering and giving gratitude for the patients and those who ministered among them at Kalaupapa, Molokai on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its inception? This place of painful separation for those afflicted with Hansen's Disease (otherwise known as leprosy) was a place of tears and heartache. Yet God was there too... in the loving presence of those who chose to serve the residents.

## **Happy Birthday to these members and friends of our church Ohana!**

Kalehua Lee (3), Edwin "JR" Pacris (8), Robert Ahia (9), Bill Stormont (11), Isaac Queja-Bidad (13),  
Brian Padilla (13), Admiral Tumaneng (17), Randal Payao (24)

## A Reminder...

We have had a visitation of rats recently. Rats are attracted to anything that reminds them that they are hungry. Gum, candy and the wrappers for gum and candy, not to mention crumbs and droppings from plates of food from the Fellowship Hour are an open invitation for them to come and dine. Therefore, the church council offers this reminder to both the English speaking congregation that meets in the morning and the Kosraean Fellowship that meets in the afternoon:

Please do not consume food anywhere on the church property except on the lanai. This includes the church sanctuary and the library / Sunday School room. It especially includes items like gum, candy, and other snacks that are small and easy to carry from one place to another. Please respect the church property. Though it seems like a small issue, it is really an issue of respect for this sacred space which God has entrusted to our care. Mahalo! Mahalo!

## Update on the Pastoral Search process

When a church is in a time of transition between pastors, it has an opportunity to do some important thinking about identity and purpose. Theologians identify five developmental tasks that are important for a healthy passage to a new future:

- 1. Coming to terms with our history**
  - Where have we been and what have we been doing?
- 2. Discovering a new identity**
  - Who are we now and what keeps us going?
- 3. Allowing and Empowering new leaders**
  - Who is prepared to take organizational responsibility for this in-between time?
- 4. Renewing denominational linkages**
  - What is our relationship now to the United Church of Christ and to other churches?
- 5. Commitment to new leadership and a new future**
  - Where do we want to go, who do we want to be and are we prepared to move forward?

At the February 9 Annual Meeting, the church will be presented with an opportunity to affirm the appointment of our Pastoral Search Committee. This committee will complete the Church Profile for distribution to prospective ministers who are interested in learning more about our church. They will receive pastoral profiles and review them, sifting through information and selecting those candidates that seem to resonate with the nature and needs of our church at this time in our life together. Finally, they will select one candidate from among all the applicants whom they believe will do the best job. The congregation will then have an

opportunity to vote on this candidate after a time for getting to know them and discerning the leading of God's Spirit in bringing this person to us.

Rev. Diane Wieble was very helpful on Sunday, January 26 as she talked the church council through the whole process from where we are now to the time when we extend a call to a new pastor. Our church by-laws indicate that the Pastoral Search committee should be comprised of three people who serve on the church council with the rest (five more) coming from the general membership and representative of a cross-section of our church. Your presence and vote are important for this meeting. Please come and take part!

## A Journey Through Lent to Easter

Soon we will be observing Ash Wednesday and after that, the six Sundays of Lent that lead to Easter on April 20. Ash Wednesday is on March 5 this year. We will hold an Ash Wednesday service both at 1:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. for anyone wishing to mark the beginning of this reflective season in company with others in a sacred space. During the six Sundays of Lent, we will be traveling with Jesus as he encountered the sick, demon-possessed, lame, blind and spiritually hungry people of his community. Putting himself out there on behalf of others got him killed. When selfless love meets entrenched self-interest, the result is never pretty. Some of the people we'll meet on this Lenten journey include

The Voice of Temptation  
The Woman at the Well,  
The Three Men Born Blind  
Nicodemus the Pharisee  
Lazarus Who Came to Life Again  
The Money Changers in the Temple

## Interfaith Communities in Action

The January meeting of ICIA was held on Tuesday, January 28 at the Hilo Honpa Honwanji Betsuin on Kilauea Ave. and our representative at the meeting was Gail Kagawa. She reports that at the meeting, two representatives from Hawaii Health Connector were present to explain the new health insurance arrangements for individuals, non-profits and small businesses under the Affordable Care Act. She brought back some helpful brochures and information that is available in the church office.

Each participating organization at the meeting gave a report on its activities and concerns. There are two special events that will occur in Hilo in March. The first is called "Share Peace", an educational seminar sponsored by the Buddhist Women's Association to be held on March 22 from 9:30 am. To 2:00 p.m. The flyer is posted on our bulletin board.

The second event is a visit from Martha Hennesy who is the granddaughter of Dorothy Day, well known activist who was co-founder of the Catholic Worker Movement in 1933. Martha has traveled to Iran, Mexico, Afghanistan, Egypt, Russia, Iraq, Jordan, Italy and other countries on behalf of the poor and those suffering injustice. She will be speaking about her travels and the opportunities to make a difference in the world when she visits Hilo at the end of March, details to be announced. The next ICIA meeting will be held on February 25 at the Neighborhood Place of Puna, 350 Lehua St., Hilo.

## You Have the Power to Choose

Choice is a powerful thing. You can choose how you will treat other people, how you will respond to them, speak to them and interact with them. You have the power to choose if today will be a good day or a bad day, no matter what happens. You have the power to choose the direction our church will take. Yes, its in your hands because we will be electing a Pastoral Search Committee and those who serve on it will represent us in the process. You have the power to decide if you will be angry at someone, or afraid of a situation that appears out of control, or hopeful and involved when it would be easier to check out and let someone else take responsibility.

Behavior is a choice. No one else is responsible for your behavior but you. And to a large extent, feelings are choice. When something happens that we don't like, we can choose how to respond. No one is in control of that response but us. The question is, do you know how powerful you are?? It means taking responsibility for what we do, what we say, how we react and how we handle a stressful situation.

I'm grateful for all the people who have made healthy choices to keep their cool, serve with patience and faithfulness, keep their eye on the mission and calling of the church, acknowledge their imperfection, stay true to their values and beliefs and move forward choosing to hope and believe that God is leading us into the future. In life, change is a constant. It is inevitable. But growth is a choice. And choosing to grow is one of the most powerful choices anyone can make. First United Protestant Church is in a time of CHANGE. Whether we will learn, move forward and grow through this experience is up to us to choose. Pastor Ron

## Servant Leadership for February

Greeters & Ushers: Karisa & Royalyn Solmerin  
 Acolyte: Ben Wyatt  
 Communion Prep: Joanne Pocsidio  
 Communion Servers: Fay Mae, Katrina, Shannalyn & Streisand

February	2	9	16	23	Mar. 2
Lay Reader	Fay Mae	Crystal	Royalyn	Danny	Bob
Flowers	Fay & Nixon	Jane McLean	OPEN	OPEN	OPEN
Coffee Hour	Fay Jack	Jade	Karisa	Kosraeans	Debbie
Children's Church	Laurel Luth	OPEN	Laurel Luth	OPEN	OPEN



On Sunday, January 12, Baby Blankets were presented to children born in 2013. The following families received blankets: Sheldon & Karena Asejo with Kayson, Kurt & Jade Iokepa with Mikaela, Jacob & Crystal Ha`a Davenport with Jasper, Kalehua Lee with Iomaikalani, Scott & Lisa Shiroma with Cassidy, and Chad & Alissa Wasserman with Malina.



Installation of new council members was held on January 12. From left, Faye Jack, Betty Nekoba, Debbie Sasan, Sali Queja & Gail Kagawa are new members of the council.



January 25, 2014 Baptism for Mikaela Iokepa