

First United Protestant Church

United Church of Christ

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Return Service Requested



Welcome to First United Protestant Church Hilo, Hawaii

First United Protestant Church of Hilo is part of the greater United Church of Christ and was founded in 1868. We were originally named the First Foreign Church, and were known early on for our hospitality and welcome to sailors who came to the Big Island of Hawaii. Today, as a community of faith we are committed to the personhood of Jesus Christ, we are committed to being in unity with the Body of Christ, and we are committed to the work Christ calls us to in the world. On Sunday's we have meditation beginning at 9:50am and worship begins shortly after 10:00am. No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!!

Sunday Morning Meditation	9:50 am
Sunday Worship Service	10:00 am
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.

No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

December 2019

First United Protestant Church

Sermon Themes for December 2019

***Sermon themes and Scripture texts may change at the Pastor's discretion.**

****Meditation begins every Sunday at 9:50am during the prelude.**

Sunday, December 1st, 10:00 AM - Scriptures: Matthew 24:36-44. Sermon Title: *"Awake! Alert! Ready!"* **First Sunday of Advent.**

In this scripture Jesus encourages his disciples not to focus on some future return or some day of judgement, but instead he wants them to remain focused on their mission in the present. To remain alert, awake, and ready to not wasting time with the every day business of life, but to live as he did.

Sunday, December 8th, 10:00 AM - Scriptures: Romans 15:4-13. Sermon Title: *"Who Did Christ Not Welcome?"* **Second Sunday of Advent.**

In this scripture Paul sees Jews and Gentiles, with different opinions, traditions, and customs trying to worship God. Yet each group tends to look down on the other group because of the convictions they hold. Paul is trying to overcome these differences and is working to bring both groups together as one church.

Sunday, December 15th, 10:00 AM - Scriptures: Luke 2:1-21. Sermon Title: *"A Unrehearsed Christmas Story"* by the FUPC & Kosraean Church Keiki. **Third Sunday of Advent.**

Join us this Sunday as the children at First United Protestant Church and the Kosraean Church come together for a Christmas Play, which is directed by June Dela Cruz. Come support our Keiki as they take on their assigned roles and bring the Christmas Story to life in a fun and imaginative way.

Sunday, December 22nd, 10:00 AM - Scriptures: Isaiah 35:1-10. Sermon Title: *"Looking Forward to Joy."* **Fourth Sunday of Advent. UCC Christmas Fund Offering**

In this scripture Isaiah announces the coming transformation of lands and human disabilities, locations, emotions, and destines. It sings of the joy of liberation, homecoming, and being restored back into relationship with God. And in doing so it paints a portrait of expectation for the one who would enter the world to set all things right and make all things new.

Tuesday, December 24th, 6:00 PM - Scriptures: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14. **Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.**

Join us for our annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service as we sing Christmas hymns together, light the last candle of Advent, and celebrate the coming birth of Christ.

Sunday, December 29th, 10:00 AM - Scriptures: Matthew 2:13-23. Sermon Title: *"To Be Announced"*. **First Sunday after Christmas. Kosraean Mahs will follow our worship service.**

God warns the wise men not to return to Herod and an angel appears to Joseph in a dream, warning him to take Jesus and flee to Egypt to escape Herod. Herod is determined to destroy this child and orders the destruction of all male children, hoping that Jesus will be among them. Through another dream, Joseph receives word to return to Israel after Herod's death.

In The Name of Truth, Life, and Love:

A Monthly Message from the Pastor

Beloved of First United Protestant Church,

There was a lot to be thankful for last month. I first want to thank all those who participated in the planning and organizing of events at the church in November. There are so many people to name and thank, but without you events like my Installation Service, the Thanksgiving Luncheon, and Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration would not have gone off so well. People served in all areas to make these events well attended and received, from the changing of light bulbs and landscaping, to long hours decorating and cooking. I thank you for the time, talent, and treasure you shared with us. In this newsletter are pictures from many of the events we held and hosted.



Over the last two months the church has held several fundraisers. We raised a total of \$682.88 from the "Give Aloha Fundraiser," \$692.00 from the Christmas Shopping Fundraiser," and \$1,347.00 for the Interfaith Affordable Housing Project. The Youth Group also held an ice cream fundraiser this month, raising \$249.50 to support those youth from our church who want to attend the National Youth Event at Purdue University. The approximate cost per person is \$2,000.00, so they are chipping away at it with hopes of attending. We also had what I believe was a successful Annual Stewardship Campaign. Since Stewardship Sunday we have received a total of 20 pledge certificates totaling \$33,180.00. This was five more pledges than we received last year, and the total amount pledged for 2020 increased by 114% from the previous year. I want to thank those who were able to commit to a financial stewardship pledge this year and all those who continue to support the church through open plate offering.

Our mission work at the church over this last month was not just done financially either. A total of 28 shoeboxes were filled for the Shoebox Ministry this year. This is three more shoeboxes than last year, and I was told we only had 12 filled our first year. These shoeboxes will go to Operation Christmas Child, who then sends the shoeboxes to children in over 100 countries. The shoeboxes provide children with gifts for Christmas and provides the opportunity to share the good news of the Gospel with them. We also collected enough nonperishable food items in November to make 4 Thanksgiving Baskets that went to families who might be experiencing a food shortage or in need of extra support.

Our second Visioning Retreat was also held in November, where a prospective Vision and Mission Statement was drafted for First United Protestant Church. What began way back in

September as a question, "Who is God Calling First United Protestant Church to be?" resulted in two statements that I believe give us a sense of direction and purpose. You will find those statements and more information about them in this month's newsletter. I want to encourage you to share your thoughts and input.

Our organ restoration project began this month. On November 19th the organ restorer, Jim Gruber, traveled to St. James Episcopal Church in Waimea to remove pipe organ components that we had purchased from them in October. Jim arrived to First United Protestant Church that evening where he and Pastor Chris worked on unloading and removing them until nearly 8pm. In the coming weeks and months the Church Council and Organ Committee will begin talking about our next steps. This past month it was noticed that large amounts of rainwater have been pouring into the church basement where vital components of the organ are located, threatening the organ itself and the restoration project. The Church Council is working on finding the cause of the problem, has provided some temporary relief, and is working toward a solution to prevent it from continuing to happen. I want to thank all those who have been taking turns going down to the basement to remove the excess water to prevent further damage from occurring.

As we begin December I want to thank those who ended their terms and have served faithfully on the Church Council, Jane McLean and Gail Kagawa. I also want to thank those who have continued to remain on the Church Council in new roles, Debbie Sasan and Fay Jack, and those who are joining us either again or for the first time, Joanne Pocsidio, Rosalind Queja, and Carolyn Lee. There are so many important issues and events taking place in the life of the church, and I thank these folks for their sacrifice and commitment to the church.

This month we are beginning our new Advent book study on "Light of the World" by Amy-Jill Levine. The book will explore many of the biblical texts surrounding the birth of Jesus. The book will be a good companion and devotion to this Advent Season. I have already read through the first chapter, and Amy-Jill Levine uses her knowledge of Jewish Studies to provide new insights to these advent scriptures we have come to know and read each year. If you are unable to attend the book study you can still purchase the book and follow along each week.

The Advent season is a time in which we spend reflecting on our own spiritual preparation for the coming of Jesus the Christ. Ask yourself, "What do you need to release, let go of, or unplug from so that you are ready to receive and see the coming Christ in our world?" There are so many distractions and challenges in our lives, but the Advent Season provides us with an opportunity to focus on the characteristics of our faith that keep us grounded in remembering who is the Lord of our lives. Our focus on the coming Christ reminds us each week of the Advent Season that hope, peace, joy, and love are far more triumphant and powerful than our fears, challenges, and distractions. I want to encourage you to join us this month for all that we have happening at First United Protestant Church, the youth's "Unrehearsed Christmas Story" play, our Christmas Potluck, our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, and the Kosraean Mahs which will follow worship on December 29th.

With Love,



Upcoming Christmas Services

There are a number of Christmas Services coming up that we wanted to let you know about. First on **Thursday December 19th at 7:00pm** we have been invited to a Blue Christmas Service at the Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles. This is an interfaith worship service that lifts up the depression, sadness, or grief many feel during the holiday season. Pastor Chris has been asked to participate in the worship service. Next, our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be on **Tuesday December 24th at 6:00pm**. Lastly, please join us for worship on **Sunday December 29th at 10:00am**! Immediately following our joint worship service the Kosraean Congregation will have their Kosraean Mahs. It is something you will not want to miss!



New Member Class

Are you interested in becoming a member of First United Protestant Church? On **Sunday January 12th at 11:30am** Pastor Christ will host a new member class in the Sunday School Room for those who are interested in membership. During the class he will cover what it means to be a member of the church. A new member installation will be held later that month or early February during worship for those who decide to join the church. If you have questions about the class or would like to discuss membership further please reach out to Pastor Chris.



First United Protestant Church's Vision & Mission Statement

This past September we began having open discussions about the church's future, and provided opportunities for members and friends of the church to offer input. Those who attended the discussion meetings and left feedback felt that the top priority of our church's future was to first create a vision and mission statement. They felt that we needed a vision and mission statement that would tell people who we are and would help provide a sense direction for our church.

We held a Visioning Retreat in October and November with the intention of forming a vision and mission statement. At the first Visioning Retreat we set out to answer the question, "Who is God calling First United Protestant Church to be?" The answers were exciting, and we shared those with the congregation in October. When we met again in November for our second retreat, we began the process of forming a vision and mission statement based on those answers.

Below is a draft of the vision and mission statement we would like to present to First United Protestant Church. Our hope is to bring this vision and mission statement to the **Annual Congregation Meeting on February 9th, 2020** for a vote, to be accepted into our church bylaws. Before that time comes, we would like you to provide feedback and your input on the vision and mission statement that was created. What do you feel needs to be changed or enhanced to highlight who God is calling First United Protestant Church to be?

Vision: Our vision is to welcome and love the diversity of all God's People. To serve and support others through action and social justice. To be a community of faith which encourages spiritual growth through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Mission: Our mission is to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ by working together to overcome the barriers that exclude and divide people, so that God's inclusive love may be known. To commit ourselves to where faithful action and outreach is needed both locally and around the world, so that others may experience peace and healing. To share in meaningful worship through uplifting music and fellowship. To offer Christian education through study, meditation, and prayer. We walk with others on their spiritual journey as they are inspired and empowered to live as Jesus did: full of faith, hope, possibility, and love.

Please use the space below to provide your feedback **by Sunday December 15th**. The group will meet again in late December or early January to discuss making changes to the vision and mission statement based on the feedback that was provided. We thank you for your participation!!

Confirmation Class at the Beach!!!

On **Sunday December 8th from 2:00pm to 5:00pm** the Confirmation Class would like to invite their families, and the other youth at the church, to join them for an afternoon at the beach. The beach they have selected to meet at is "4 Miles Beach," which is right before Carlsmith Beach Park. The Confirmation Class was given a free day to select something that they would want to do together, and they decided they wanted to spend that day at the beach with their family and friends at the church.



"The Unrehearsed Christmas Story"

Join us on **Sunday December 15th** during our normal worship time as the children at First United Protestant Church and the Kosraean Church come together for a Christmas Play, which will be directed by June Dela Cruz. Come support our Keiki as they take on the roles of Joseph, Mary, Shepherds, Angels, and themselves to bring the Christmas Story to life in a fun and imaginative way. There will be Christmas music to sing too!



First United Protestant Church Happenings



On Saturday November 2nd Pastor Chris was installed as the new Settled Pastor at First United Protestant Church. Those in attendance that day included Rev. Becky Turner from Christ Church UCC in St. Louis, Rev. Richard Kamanu from the Hawaii Conference, Rev. Diane Hultman of the Hawaii Island Association, Rev. Eric Anderson from Church of the Holy Cross UCC, and Pastor Nixon Jack from the Kosraean Church. Our organist, Michael Springer, led a beautiful ecumenical choir, the Kosraean Church sang a breath taking song, and a magnificent lunch followed the service out on the lanai. It was such a memorial day!! (photos by June Dela Cruz and Pastor Chris)



First United Protestant Church Happenings

On Sunday November 3rd Carter Glen Czarnecki was baptized into the church by Pastor Rev. Becky Turner, who preached the day before at Pastor Chris's installation Service. Carter wore the same cloths Pastor Chris wore when he was baptized. (photos by Pastor Chris)

On Sunday November 17th the Youth Group hosted a ice cream fundraiser at the church to raise money for those who want to attend the National Youth Event this coming summer at Purdue University. (photo by June Dela Cruz)

Our own Tyler Dela Cruz had a leading role in the Hawaiian Nutcracker at University of Hawaii. Members and friends from the church came to support her throughout the month of November.



First United Protestant Church Happenings

Joanne Pocsidio decorated the church altar for Thanksgiving with an array of fruits and vegetables. The altar and our new altar cross were looking beautiful and on display for the Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration.

(photo by Pastor Chris)



On Sunday November 22nd the church held their annual Thanksgiving Luncheon after worship. Turkey, ham, potatoes, mac'n cheese, gravy, deserts, and so much more was served that day. A special thank you to Bob Ahia, Kathleen Kim, The Kosraean Church, Fay Jack, Jane McLean, Gwynn Sosa, and Richard and Bonnie Alger.

(photo by Pastor Chris)

First United Protestant Church Happenings



Over 200 people from 16 faith groups attended the Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration on November 26th for a night of singing and unity. The Thanksgiving Celebration was well attended by the community. A special thank you to Fay Jack, Betty Nekoba, Kathleen Kim, Bob Ahia, Jeremy Agag, and the Kosraean Church for all your help in making this night such a success!! (photos by Carolyn



Kosraean Church at FUPC



The Pastors from the Kosraean Church did so much last month at First United Protestant Church. They joined Pastor Chris for his installation service, they worked on cleaning and repairing things at the church, they supported the Thanksgiving Luncheon, and they assisted with and participated in the Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration. Pictured are Deacon Bell Tosie, Pastor Nixon, and Pastor Danny.

(photographs by Deaconess Hanna Alokoa)

Kosraean Church at FUPC



The Women's Christian Association led the way this past month with hospitality and fellowship in radical and extravagant ways. They helped prepare food for Pastor Chris's installation service, helped to clean and spruce up the church one Saturday, made food for the Thanksgiving Luncheon, and served food and sang at the Interfaith Thanksgiving Celebration. Pictured at the top are Deaconess Havelyn Tosie, Dora Jackson, and Deaconess Vivian Melsamel. **On November 24th JayAnn Tosie** served as an Altar Server during our joint worship service and assisted Pastor Chris in reading liturgy and prayer.

(photographs by Deaconess Hanna Alokoa)

*Welcome
to this Sacred
Prayer Corner*

Light a candle
to make your prayers
visible and real.
Behold the Light and Believe!
Written prayer requests will be lifted
in prayer by this Church Ohana.
May all who hold a prayer in their
heart find Comfort and Peace!



Please include the following people and situations in your prayers:

Doris Toma	Mike Gardner
Fay Jack	Cullen Chee
Pedro Queja	Lei Semana
Michael Russell	Ella Fontanilla
Sali Queja & Family	Margo Aguiar
Sheldon Asejo	Janet Lang
Royal Solmerin	Fillmore Lorenzo
Traveyion Taylor	Gabrielle Marlo

Happy Birthday to the following Friends and Members!!!

Tyler Dela Cruz—2nd

Inez Bidad—4th

Froilan Queja—5th

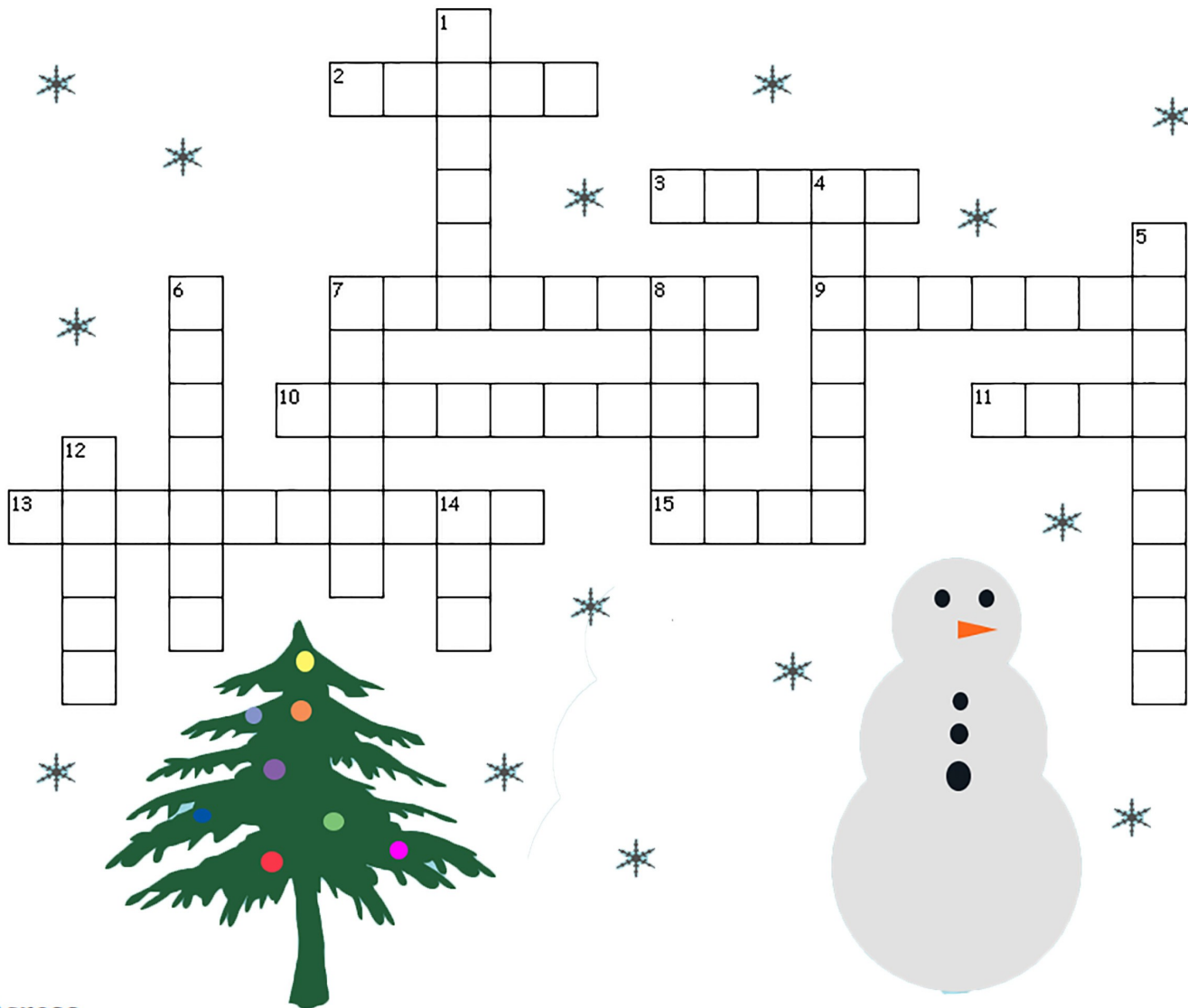
Zandrizz Queja—8th

Matilda Skilling—11th

Katrina Lorenzo—12th

Debbie Sasan—13th

Christmas Crossword Puzzle



Across

2. Song or Movie Title: "_____ Christmas"
3. "Not a creature was stirring, not even a _____"
7. This 1984 comedy horror taught us not to feed our mogwai after midnight
9. Glowing red nose
10. Jack tries to take over Santa's role in "_____ Before Christmas"
11. Alternative name for Christmas
13. Christmas ballet
15. Kevin McCallister defends his house against two crooks in "_____ Alone"

Down

1. Turboman was the sought after toy in this Christmas comedy, _____ All the Way"
4. "Bah, humbug!"
5. Roasted on an open fire
6. _____ on 34th Street
7. "How the _____ stole Christmas"
8. Direction of Santa's Workshop
12. Santa's tallest helper
14. Will Farrell leaves the North Pole to find his father

Please mark your calendar for these upcoming events Happening at First United Protestant Church...

December 2019

Sunday Dec. 8th - Confirmation Beach Day! The Confirmands would like to invite their family and other youth at the church to join them at "4 Miles Beach" from 2pm-5pm.

Monday Dec. 9th - Last day to place your order for Christmas Poinsettias.

Tuesday Dec. 10th - Light of the World Book Study 6:00pm-7:30pm.

Tuesday Dec. 10th - Puna Men's Choir Concert 6:30pm-9:30pm.

Sunday Dec. 15th - Church Council Meeting following worship at 11:30am.

Tuesday Dec. 17th - Light of the World Book Study 6:00pm-7:30pm.

Thursday Dec. 19th - Blue Christmas Service at Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles at 7:00pm. This is an ecumenical event with other local churches.

Sunday Dec. 22nd - Christmas Party & Potluck After Worship.

Tuesday Dec. 24th - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 6:00pm.

Wednesday Dec. 25th - Christmas Day - Office Closed.

Saturday Dec. 28th - Kosrae Hilo Community Christmas Party 9:00am at Church of the Holy Cross UCC Faith Hall.

Sunday Dec. 29th - Kosraean Mahs following worship service.

January 2020

Wednesday Jan. 1st - New Years Day - Office Closed.

Friday Jan 3rd-9th - Pastor Chris will be at the Next Generation Leadership Initiative (NGLI) Training in Arizona.

Sunday Jan. 12th - New Member Class at 11:30am in Sunday School Room.

Sunday Jan. 19th - Church Council Meeting following worship at 11:30am.

February 2020

Sunday Feb. 9th - Annual Congregation Meeting following our normal worship service.

Sunday Feb. 16th - Church Council Meeting following worship at 11:30am