

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii
September 9, 2012
Grandparents Sunday

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Call to Worship

Every universe within the heavens keeps telling the wonders of God. Each day grants us the foundation of hope for following Christ. Each night announces any darkness will be followed by dawn of a new tomorrow. Yet, the unfolding universes beyond our imagination can't speak a word, and there is never a sound in the echo of their voices.

Creation's message reaches all the earth. It spins like the wind around the world. Generation after generation raises up saints eager to run a race of renewed hope. Nothing is hid from God's radiant light of holy mercy. All people can embrace God's holy grace.

The LORD's guidance is perfect. Christ gives us new life. Sacred teachings inspire love across boundaries of division and last forever. They shed the rays of wisdom into daily decisions for ordinary people. The LORD's instruction is merciful according to your needs.

Our hearts surge with joy. The Lord's commands shine brightly. God's loving light penetrates the darkness of doubt. All of God's decisions are perfected as we trust mercy and fairness. By your teachings, Lord, we are warned; by following your example, we are greatly rewarded. Amen.

Invocation: Lord of time and space, Lord of breath and heart beat, refresh and shape the experiences of our lives. Grant us safe passage through any danger. Open for us pathways of friendship. We hear you say "Give me your heart!" So, we ask, "How?" You say our heart is where our treasure is. May our souls find richness with people in our life. God, lift us with courageous freedom from any anxiety that chases us with fear. Your Holy Spirit invites us to see Jesus reaching out from the cross with the hand of forgiveness. You know our fears, our pains. You know our loves. You treasure our coming and our going. We are Yours at every turn and corner of each day. Amen.

WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture: (Mark 7:24-37 NRSV): From there he set out and went away to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, {25} but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. {26} Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. {27} He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' {28} But she answered him, 'Sir, * even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' {29} Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' {30} So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. {31} Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. {32} They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him. {33} He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. {34} Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha', that is, 'Be opened.' {35} And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. {36} Then Jesus * ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. {37} They were astounded beyond measure, saying, 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'

Sermon: "Be Open: Hear This, Insiders and Outsiders"

WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED

Call to Confession: "We remember the sins of the world are forgiven by Jesus Christ. None of us know all our faults. Forgive us when we sin without knowing it. Forgive our intentional sins. Teach us with compassion not to do wrong on purpose. Lord, don't let sin gain control over our lives!"
(Ps 19: 12 adapted)

Confession: "Let our words and our thoughts be pleasing to you, LORD. You are a mighty foundation of strong and loving wisdom in whom we trust. We confess our ability to make quick judgments that end up shattering relationships. Grant us courage to choose patient forgiveness as we cross through challenging passages in our experiences. Walk with us, so we can grow faithfully in our capacity to speak to You truthfully about ourselves. Show us how to listen attentively, and to work cooperatively for the sake of creation. We would follow you, Jesus." Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: “You will be innocent, and not guilty, of some terrible fault. You are beloved by God’s own son. His love is greater than any human sin.” Amen. (Ps 19:13)

Invitation to the Offering: “What must I yield unto the Lord for being so good to me? I will pour out my offering...I will keep my promise where ever your people meet.” Amen.

Prayer of Dedication: Generous and wonderful Creator, we have received amazing blessings in friendship and skill, from nature, and from co-workers in our community. Now, Holy God, we come to share what you have given us, so that we might love You more dearly, and serve You more clearly. Guide our choices, our efforts, and our ministry in your Son’s name here as Your Church of the Holy Cross, in Hilo, in Hawai’i and in all places. Amen