

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii
September 23, 2012

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Call to Worship

We pray to you, LORD! Please listen. Do not let us conceal ourselves from You when trouble is near. Probe the depth of our prayers and quickly come to us in our need.

We sing to God with praise. Each of us declares the wonderful deeds of our Creator. God loves us! The Holy Spirit embraces us! We glory in the Holy presence, let every heart beat seek the Lord and rejoice in the gift of life.

You are God's people. Let us open our eyes to see the needs of the world. Let every fiber of our being become a life line of abundant compassion and harmony, a chain of devotion and hospitality - let us reach beyond ourselves and share with the whole people of God.

God you both transcend and transform the space around us. You are in the air we breathe. You search and know the wideness of our souls. Inspire us to embrace Your fullness with grace. May our daily choices honor your glory? Now, we come to worship rejuvenated by bonds of love in Christ, Jesus. AMEN.

Invocation: O God of all that is and is to be, our Maker, whose eye is even on the sparrow, you care with tenderness for this world you have shaped. We come to travel in your presence through the adventures of each day. Your loving Spirit redeems your lost and grieving children from the loneliness of any despair. You provide nourishment for body and soul. You sent Christ as a servant to bind up our wounded brokenness and heal our pain of suffering. We are in the arms of your joyous compassion. Grant that in this hour of sacred worship we will respond to your call for discipleship. Help us to confess our need for love; and let us find the courage and freedom to discover your amazing grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture: (Mark 9:33-37 NRSV): Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' {34}But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. {35}He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' {36}Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking the child in his

arms, he said to them,{37}'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

Sermon: "First in Caring – Compassionate Acceptance"

WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED

Call to Confession: "Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked or give up on God's love by taking the path that leads to idle conversations and cynical sarcasm. Come now, speak with a pure heart and delight in the mercy of God's love."

Based on Ps. 1:1-2)

Confession: God of grace, sometimes grudges cloud our vision. Sometimes we want to have everything smoothly go our way. We may grumble as we trip over kindness when someone offers us hope. We may object and argue just to get our own way. We may forget the needs of others. Help us find mercy when we experience anxious disappointment. Guide us so we do not adopt bad habits. Energize us to shine as searchlights of companionship in every corner of daily life. Inspire us to love family, friends, neighbors, and strangers... as You love... with the forgiveness of Jesus. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Our Lord watches over our spirit with forgiveness. Mercy sprouts with new life and does not wither, but grows in your soul as the strength of the Lord's blessing. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering: ""A generous person will be blessed, knowing how to share food and shelter with the poor. A wise person will teach every child as their own. They will share the wisdom of their heart and speak up for those unable to speak for themselves; they will lend their voice to those who are destitute. Speak up and act fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy. Come, offer blessings from within your heart and soul."

Prayer of Dedication: Gracious Lord, Thank You for the people who pray beside us this morning. Thank You for knowing the gifts we each bring to all our relationships. Thank You for reminding us to stop and see how we can each influence the lives of the children of this wide, wide world. You have transformed our abilities by inviting us to examine our choices as well as the values that we now offer in Your sacred presence. Thank You for letting us walk and serve with humble compassion. May Your name be glorified. Receive our commitment to build our lives in mutual service as the whole people of God. In Christ's name - Amen.