

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii
November 25, 2012

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Call to Worship

Leader: The Lord has chosen a dwelling place among the people of the earth. God desires to dwell within our hearts and minds. God wants to share in the events of our lives.

People: We welcome God's presence into our lives. Come, Lord, find your resting place within my soul. I will make my life a Holy Temple where you are honored in my speech and my actions.

Leader: May our lives be sacred as sanctuaries of God's love and compassion. May the wisdom of God be honored as our source of strength with courage and forgiveness so that truthfulness can be at work within us, and around us?

All: The Lord is good. Our God's steadfast love endures forever, and the Lord's faithfulness embraces all generations. Amen.

Invocation:

Come all embracing God. Fix in us the ability to walk beside you, Lord, without staggering under the complexities of this world. May we rise to embrace the challenges to become instruments of peace as you call us to join your ministry in service and care for people and all of creation. You affirm the truth of sustaining love. May our desire be guided with trust in your compassionate wisdom. Come now with the power of your Holy Spirit and enable us to breathe the fullness of your grace. Amen.

WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture: (John 18:33-37 NRSV): Then Pilate entered the headquarters again, summoned Jesus, and asked him, 'Are you the King of the Jews?' {34}Jesus answered, 'Do you ask this on your own, or did others tell you about me?' {35}Pilate replied, 'I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests have handed you over to me. What have you done?' {36}Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.' {37}Pilate asked him, 'So you are a king?' Jesus answered, 'You say

that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.'

Sermon: "Ruler of Wisdom and Truthfulness"

WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED

Call to Confession: It is hard for anyone to see what perfect truth is. Sometimes it is hard for us to open our lives in humility before God. Without self-justification, we desire to be "ok" with God.

Confession: Inquisitive God, challenge us to be honest in our willingness to encourage one another in this world. Help us to understand our doubts. When we are hurried, help us find patience. Grant us the wisdom to offer forgiveness to one another as you have forgiven us in Christ Jesus. May we admit our mistakes and then seek reconciliation. When our spirit is wounded, remind us how much Your love invites us to inspire encouragement for our family, neighbors, and strangers. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: God straightens us out. With trusting faith we can enter the heart of God and discover the powerful embrace of Jesus' love welcoming us home. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering: "With all that we have going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. Don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the good work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is ever a waste of time or effort." (I Cor. 15:58)

Prayer of Dedication: Marvelous Creator of all that is, ever has been, and ever will be, we approach You filled with the celebration of Thanksgiving. We have been blessed with the abilities to learn from experience, to develop our skills and talents, and to cherish our relationships with the people who have blessed our lives. We come now to your Holy Cross, so we can dedicate our moments and our days in appreciation for the many ways you have found favor with us so that we can share our blessings with others, in Your Son's name. Amen.