

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL  
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii  
December 2, 2012

**WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD**

**Call to Worship**

*Lighting the first Advent Candle “Akahai - Compassion”  
Christ Connects Us to Each Other in the Spirit of Akahai*

**“And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you” (1 Thessalonians 3:12).**

Centering (The congregation, led by the choir hums the melody of “Gentle Joseph, Joseph Dear,” Hymn # 105.)

**Christ, Light of the World, You connect the whole creation to God’s aloha. You cross the horizon of every day to embrace the world in aloha.**

Today we light the first Advent candle symbolizing the spirit of akahai, a Hawaiian word that expresses caring, kindness, tenderness, and gentleness. May we live with the grace of Christ’s akahai.

**Gracious God, help us increase and abound in love for one another and for all. Help us to care with tender kindness for your creation.**

In our homes or outside at work, at school, and at play may the light of caring shine through our words, actions, and attitudes. May we reflect your light of Christ’s love in us.

**Holy God, help us increase and abound in love for one another and for all your creatures.**

God’s unconditional love for our families and all humanity, for our ohana, was manifested in God’s gift of Jesus Christ. Through him we saw God’s caring, kindness, and tenderness lived out. In Jesus, we embrace akahai – care and gentle kindness for all that is.

**Holy God, help us increase and abound in love for one another and for all people of the earth. Amen.**

**Invocation:**

God of holy joy, we give you thanks for this season awaiting your Son's arrival to claim us as Your own. Awaken us to engage in all the events of our world as full participants in your unfolding story of Your presence in history. Pour on us the faith, the *"akahai"* and wisdom of your Holy Spirit. Teach us to embrace Jesus when we meet him in our families, our neighbors, our co-worker, in strangers, and to cherish all people in his name. Let your Advent candle burn brightly with the light of compassion. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

**WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD**

**Scripture:** (Luke 21:25-36 NRSV): 'There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. {26}People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. {27}Then they will see "the Son of Man coming in a cloud" with power and great glory. {28}Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.' {29} Then he told them a parable: 'Look at the fig tree and all the trees; {30}as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. {31}So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. {32}Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. {33}Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. {34} 'Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, {35}like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. {36}Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.'

**Sermon:** "Make Ready – Get Set – GO!"

**WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED**

**Call to Confession:** Salvation is near to all who first believe. Awake! Don't even waste one moment wavering with speculation. Every choice is important. We can't wait until the last minute to dress ourselves in a life that fully embraces Christ. We must be energized and active - filled with power of grace to guide us. (Adapted from Rm 13:11-14)

**Confession:** Holy God, some days we just want to rest and take a break from the pressures of life! But, you give us life so that we can embrace the joys of care and work for reconciliation where we have found stress. Sometimes, You wake us up in the middle of the night and

whisper to our souls. Sometimes, we want to be alone - but you enter our thoughts and guide us to seek Christ in our work, our study, our families, our friendships, and in the beauty of the world. In Jesus' name we seek to be Your people filled with forgiving love. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon:** We do not live for ourselves alone. If we live, we live unto the Lord, and if we die, we die unto the Lord; so then whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Invitation to the Offering:** "Remembering God's mercy for every generation,¼ remembering God comes to find a home in every heart,¼ we open our souls this day with thankfulness and constant sharing. We are people who God has blessed with the strength of love. Let our sharing overflow with joy.

**Prayer of Dedication:** Lord of Heaven and Earth – God of time and space - we welcome the arrival of Your Son Jesus in this Advent season. Help us to travel with him to the places where human need finds hope and where all the earth calls for us to renew its beauty with careful stewardship of resources. As the sun and the rain refresh the earth, let our offering bring life, refreshment, and growth with acts of love and mercy to serve the ministry of your church, in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Invitation to Communion**  
**Consecrating the Bread**  
**Consecrating the Cup**

Pastor Tom Olcott  
Pastor Neil Deupree  
Pastor Take Sunia

*Sharing the Bread and the Cup - Please come forward as you are able to share in bread of and his cup of our salvation. While coming forward and sharing communion let us sing together (Red Hymnal # 237):*

"Lord, You are more precious than silver,  
Lord, You are more costly than gold;  
Lord, You are more beautiful than diamonds,  
And nothing I desire compares with you." (Repeat)