

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii
December 9, 2012
Second Sunday of Advent

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Call to Worship and Invocation: Luke 3:1-6

Responsive Advent Litany:

Christ, Light of the world, connects the church to God's Aloha.
(*Relights the first Advent candle and lights the second candle.*)

Today we light the second Advent candle symbolizing the spirit of lokahi, the Hawaiian word for unity. It expresses a feeling of harmony, oneness, and being of one mind. Our unity is in Jesus Christ.

Holy One, Connect us to your Church so that through us "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." Let our Communion with Christ be world-wide "*Lokahi.*"

We are reminded of John the Baptist who prepared the way for the Christ by calling people to repentance. We are challenged today to journey in Christ's ways preparing ourselves for his coming into our lives.

The spirit of *lokahi* or harmony will lead our church towards a stronger connection between all members of the Body of Christ when we follow Christ's ways of loving God and forgiving one another.

Holy One, Come and live among us and connect us together with *Lokahi* flowing into your Church so that through us "all people shall see the salvation of your blessed Son."

WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture: (Luke 1:68-79 NRSV): 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. {69} He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David, {70} as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, {71} that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. {72} Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his

holy covenant, {73} the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us {74} that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, {75} in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. {76} And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, {77} to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. {78} By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, {79} to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

Sermon: "Go Before the Lord – Light in the Darkness"

WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED

Call to Confession: "I am confident of this, that God who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Christ Jesus."

Confession: May God be my witness, how I long with you to embrace the compassion of Christ Jesus. May we overcome our faults and remove our offenses? May our love overflow with mercy? May we let go of any lingering anger and resentment and seek peace through reconciliation with any and all enemies. May the fullness of compassionate insight help us determine what is best, so that every day with Christ we may be blameless of sin and filled with hospitality and grace for all people? May we shine the light of God's grace in our words and actions? Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: I am confident that the one who began a good work in you will bring it to completion... How wonderful a blessing is this: "All of you share God's grace with me?"
(Philippians 1:7)

Invitation to the Offering: Let us be transformed in our faith, devoting ourselves to use our energy in service with all by the grace of God. Let us follow Jesus who for the sake of our salvation humbled himself in service and was obedient according to the will of God.

Prayer of Dedication: Holy Creator, we uncover and reveal the treasured blessings of our daily activity in your presence. Guide our fellowship in Hilo to serve compassionately as your disciples. Let us remember those who out of the necessities of their lives require our compassion. We seek your blessings for the help our special Christmas Fund will have in support of United Church of Christ Ministry. With thankful hearts, we are yours for ministry and mission. Let us grow in faith as we share "Lokahi" with your world, in Jesus' name, Amen.