

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii
January 13, 2013
The Baptism of Jesus – Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Call to Worship

Responsive Call to Worship: Psalm 29: A Psalm of David

Leader: Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, banner headlines for the Lord's glory and strength. Give to the Lord the majesty due to His name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness and marvelous splendor.

ALL: The voice and Spirit of the Lord are over the waters; the glory of God thunders; the Lord is over and within great waters. The voice of the Lord is a powerful wave; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

Leader: The voice of the Lord makes creation skip like a calf when Mauna Loa dances and quakes to shake the earth. In God's temple of creation - everyone is saying, "Awesome is this Glory!" The rumbling thunder of the Lord is ruler of every perfect storm of life and within the deluge of flash floods that would overwhelm us.

ALL: We may fear the thunder of change, but we are always confident: "THE LORD GIVES UNYIELDING AND IMPENETRABLE BLESSINGS OF STRENGTH TO HIS PEOPLE; THE VOICE OF THE LORD CAN WHISPER WITH ASSURANCE IN THE SILENCE OF OUR SOULS, THE LORD ANNOINTS HIS PEOPLE WITH PEACE. THANKS BE TO GOD, GIVER OF LIFE, CREATOR OF ALL THAT IS! AMEN.

INVOCATION

O yes, God, you bring each of us along this journey of life. You show no favoritism. You accept people from every nation who trust in your power and do what is right. You have sent us the good news of peace in Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. Jesus walked the earth in Galilee, was baptized by John, and received the Holy Spirit. He went among people doing good works, healing, and teaching. You, God, went with him every step of his life. We come to fill our desire to embrace your son Jesus and his teaching as the path for our lives. We also want to be a blessing to your Holy Name. Let Christ's wisdom wash into our souls with thunderous courage and kindness. Ignite the spark of your Holy Spirit within us for the good. Amen

WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture: (Luke 3:15-17 and 21-22) 15 As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, 16 John answered all of them by saying, 'I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.' 21 Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized and was praying, the heaven was opened, 22 and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.'

Sermon: "Confirmed With Love – Heaven's Blessing Descends"

Pastor Tom Olcott

WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED

Call to Confession: God searches and knows everything about us. God knows that even when we do wrong we have an even greater potential and capacity for doing right. The Holy Spirit knows us when we are awake or asleep. Let us wake up to our moral choices with active faith.

Confession: O God, we confess when our fear silences us in the face of injustice it is a sin. Forgive us, and grant us the courageous strength to speak and act to set right any inequity and protect the weak from any neglect of this world. Help us to speak boldly and truthfully with forgiving wisdom to those who are hungry for good news. Help us to bring others the gifts of mercy and compassion as followers of your son's teaching. Fill our souls with your Holy Spirit to work for the good we can yet do. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ receives the forgiveness of their sins. With this grace, you shall recall your baptism in the Spirit and name of Jesus. Amen (Acts 10:43)

Invitation to the Offering: As you stand before God today, we are called not to be detached spectators, but involved participants. Each of us has a faithful job to do. Let the Holy Spirit of Christ descend and move in our souls. In the great adventure of life, we can give freely from what we have been given. God grants us authority as sisters and brothers with Christ. Let us be our active best. Let us practice our faith every day. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication: We are people united with people of every race and nation in faithfulness before your Holy Cross. We place ourselves into God's service side-by-side with Jesus Christ. May God receive us, and send all that we hold: ourselves, our gifts, and our work into the world to give hope, reconciling peace, and encouragement to all people. Refreshed by the Lord's Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.