

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii
January 6, 2013
Epiphany Celebration – The Awakening of Awareness

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD

Responsive Call to Worship

(Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ)

- alternating Puna and Hamakua sides reading responsively)

Puna: We believe in you, O God. Eternal Spirit. God or our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify: You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

Hamakua: You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

Puna: You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

Hamakua: You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

All: You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

Invocation: God, we sing with the voices of early morning birds whose songs proclaim your glory. We overflow with sunrise happiness. As morning gilds the sky, we resolve once more to embrace the way of Jesus' teaching. May Christ's wisdom fill us with courage and kindness. May we be aware of your compassion as we face difficult and demanding challenges. May we share your friendship wherever we are, day by day, throughout all of

2013. May we pass on the gifts you've given to us. We greet you with love, God of the whole world. Amen

WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD

Scripture: (Matthew 2:1-12) In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, 'Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage.' ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵They told him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

⁶ *"And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who is to shepherd my people Israel."*

⁷ Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, 'Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage.' ⁹When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure-chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

Sermon: "I've got good news and bad news"

Pastor Neil Deupree

WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED

Call to Confession: God is not pleased when we ignore the pain of suffering and try not to see it. When God takes up residence in our life, we forget about our own wants and wishes. We focus on our inner light - on what God wants. We share what God has freely given us – healing love and forgiveness!

Confession: (in unison) Living God, I want your love and justice to live in me this new year. I am turning the corner into a life of hope. I am mapping my way on your road to right living. May the light of your new day reveal my path ahead. I will do my best to show your mercy and your grace. In the year ahead, let me not take advantage of anyone or

anything in your creation. Please give me an assignment to work for your kingdom here in Hilo. May the star that shines through Jesus' words guide me every time I need to make a choice about the direction of my life. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon: We have things to do and places to go and persons to love as we walk each day with Christ. God gives us the grace to become the people Jesus calls us to be. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering: The seed of our faith grows in us every time we trust God. Like all plants rooted in good soil, we reach to the light for nourishment and life. May our souls blossom and then yield the fruit of compassion and understanding. May those around us "taste and see that the Lord is good."

Prayer of Dedication: Dear God, we are gathered as people united with Christ in baptism and faith and by our common humanity. We want to use the skill and ability with which you have blessed us. We come to your Holy Cross to receive the gift of your Holy Spirit. Receive from us the work of our hands,... our minds,...our hearts. Let us become people who use what we have to bless all people in your Son's name. Amen.