

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL  
440 West Lanikaula Street, Hilo, Hawaii  
Festival of Christmas Bells and New Year's Eve Sunday  
December 30, 2012 - Installation of Church Officers.

**WE GATHER TO WORSHIP GOD**

**Call to Worship: (Ringing bells with gusto!) Psalm 148**

Leader: Come ring Praise for the LORD! Ring the LORD'S praises in the highest heavens. All of you angels and messengers of peace, and all who serve him with compassion for the people, come and ring joyous praise. Sun and moon, and all of you bright stars, come and ring with shining praise.

**All: (All ringing bells and instruments of celebration together with joyous gusto!)**

Leader: Highest heavens, and water and thunder above the highest heavens, come and ring with praise. Let all things ring with praise for the name of the LORD, because we have been Created at our Creator's command, made for eternity and nothing can destroy what God has done.

**All: (All ringing bells and instruments of celebration together with gusto!)**

Leader: All creatures on earth, obey creation's commands, so come ring praise to the LORD! Whales and fish and the deep sea currents, fire and hail, snow and frost, and every Stormy Wind, come ring with praise to the LORD! Let thy Holy Spirit breath within us! All mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedars; Every wild and tame animal, all reptiles and birds, come ring with voices of praise to the LORD!

**All: (Ringing bells and instruments together with gusto!)**

Leader: Every President and every general, all nations on earth, every man and every woman, young people and old, come ring with praise for the LORD! All creation, come ring with praise for the LORD. Praise the Holy One's name alone. The glory of God is greater than heaven and earth. Ring praises of joy to the LORD!

**All: (Ringing bells and instruments together with gusto!)**

**Invocation:** O yes God, as your Son Jesus is born in our hearts and minds. Christ moves among us calling us to celebrate in everything we do. Let us see the wisdom of his mercy. Let him judge the need of the earth with righteousness. May he bring justice to the corners of affliction. May his Holy presence inspire us to defend and save all children as our own. May we ourselves as his followers be empowered with mercy and compassion for those who are weak in health, and for any who struggle to meet the demands of caring for their families in difficult economic times. Let no one of us hang off the cliff with any doubt that you hold the promise of hope and new life. Let your Son Jesus, enter into our daily activities as we share his love in all that we say and do. Come Lord, be present with us in the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen

### **WE SHARE THE WORD OF GOD**

**Scripture:** (Luke 2:41-52) 41 Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. 43 When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. 44 Assuming that he was in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' 49 He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' 50 But they did not understand what he said to them. 51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

**Sermon:** "Who is this Child? Who Makes us Ring with Hope?"

### **WE RESPOND IN WORD AND DEED**

**Call to Confession:** If you are not honest in small things, day in and day out, all year long, do you think God will trust your desires for greater things? Come and hold the Christ Child Jesus and let him grow within your soul, so you and God's son can examine together what is the sacred content of your own heart.

**Confession: (in unison)** May desire and energy find us traveling on the road of right living. Let our hearts ring with longing for God's Spirit of Truthfulness to keep each one of us on track at every turn. I pray to do my best, trying to stay away from evil schemes, and angry decisions. Let me drop all grudges or any thoughts of blame! I don't want to corrupt anyone. I don't want to mislead friends and strangers. In this year ahead, 2013, let me not abuse your creation and your love. Let your holy forgiveness work in me as a blessing for everyone in our human family, by Jesus' own Spirit of truthfulness, I pray. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon:** We have every chance in the world to do what is steadfast, faithful, and merciful. If we trust ourselves to be challenged by God to do what is needed to make everything right we will turn the world upside down and everyone – every man, woman, and child – will rise up with the grace of God's joy and will overflow with boundless love and forgiveness. Amen.

**Invitation to the Offering:** You are blessed when you care. At the moment of letting your care overflow; you find yourself cared for. Look beyond your arms' reach to grab and embrace God's love for all creation. Oh, yes, give with as more joy than you have received.

**Prayer of Dedication:** Jesus, We gather as people united in faith before your Holy Cross. Our hearts bubble over with enthusiastic joy! We place ourselves into your care for the year 2013. Here are our words., our thoughts., our work., our leisure., our friendships., our family ties – our hopes – our fears – our joys – and all our days - all are placed on the alter of your sacred mercy and love. Receive us and send both our gifts and ourselves into the world to minister and serve all people. By your Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.