

Moderator's Message

Aloha and blessings in this joyous season of Advent.

As we await with great anticipation our celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, I am reminded of all those times as a child when we hoped for lots of snow for Christmas. For the children of a Postman who walked a route in eastern Pennsylvania, perhaps this was not a good thing to be hoping for. We wanted to see reindeer prints on our roof, but the snow was usually melted or never came till the New Year. The time of waiting and then finding our hopes dashed was a good growing experience. We learned that hoping and waiting was as much fun, and maybe more, than if our wish came true. But the hope and anticipation of the gift of snow pales in comparison to the marvelous gift that we receive each year, with the birth of our Savior. What a blessing it is to know that this baby was born for us, to set us free. The magnitude of that gift cannot be measured and fills us with joy.

Some years we may be celebrating that marvelous birth for the first time without the presence of a loved one, or we may feel down and find it hard to "get into the spirit" of celebration. I have found that for me, the scriptures and readings on the anticipation of the birth have a deeper meaning due to the loss of a loved one. It is comforting to know that soon the world will be blessed with a Savior and that those scriptures on Advent and the holy birth ease loss provide encouragement, and still bring joy and comfort.

For Advent time I have always loved Mary's song or the magnificat read, spoken or sung it shows the power of faith and the willingness to follow where God leads with courage, knowing we are surrounded by God's love.

(Luke 1: 46 – 55)

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered

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those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors."

Nothing can compare to the joyous tidings of the birth to uplift, and give comfort and reassurance that we will have life eternal.

Luke 2: 8

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Have a Blessed Christmas

Sue Smith

Our weekly offering envelopes may be delayed. Included in this mailing is an envelope to be used for January 5th. If there is a further delay an envelope will be included in the next Messenger.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE

Christmas Eve – 7:30 p.m.
Fellowship will follow



If you are able to provide finger-foods for the refreshments, please let Margaret know at 895-0994 or email her at matori58@msn.com. Your donation will be greatly appreciated.

Help for our Parsonage

We are looking to refresh some of the furniture in the parsonage since our interim Pastor will be living there for up to two years.

Currently we are looking for a floor lamps, dressers, and a new sofa.

As we get closer to our interim pastor's move in date we may find other needs or if you have any ideas or items that you feel would enhance the parsonage please let the office know.

Church of the Holy Cross Holiday Office Hours

12/16 to 12/27
9am- Noon

Closed Christmas and New Year's days

Need TVs

The Church of the Holy Cross is requesting donations for working old flat screen TVs to replace our old TVs. If you have a TV that you would like to donate, please contact the Church office at 808-935-1283.

Electronic Messenger

If you would prefer to receive the Messenger via email please contact the Church office at holycrosshilo@hawaii.rr.com

Caregivers Meeting

Our next meeting will be on
Tuesday, January 14, 2014.
10 a.m. to 12 noon
Building of Faith

*We meet on the second Tuesday of each month.

WORSHIP AND SUPPLY PASTOR SCHEDULE

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Dec. 22 Pastor Larry Walter
Children's Word: Gloria
Kobayashi
3 p.m. Messiah Sing-Along

Dec 24 Pastor Larry Walter
CANDLE LIGHT SERVICE
CHRISTMAS EVE 7:30

Dec. 29 Pastor Larry Walter
Children's Word: Woody
Kita
Installation of Officers and
Board

Jan. 5 COMMUNION SERVICE
Rev. Charles Buck
Children's Word: Joyce
Nakamoto

Jan. 12 Pastor Ruth Farrell

Jan. 19 Pastor Mary Olney- Loyd

ADVENT CANDLELIGHTING

Dec. 8 Choir family – JP coordinator
Dec. 15 Sandy Mitipok family
Dec. 22 Nu'u Loa, Malia Mattos,
Dec. 24 Henry Nakamoto family

December 22, 2013

Lay Reader: Latai Loa
Advent Candlelighting: Nu'u Loa
and Malia Mattos
Flowers: Cindy Debus
Child Care: Lei Jack

December 29, 2013

Lay Reader: Sue Smith
Flowers: Laura Ota
Child Care: Malia Mattos

January 5, 2013

Lay Reader: Sue Smith
Flowers: Eric Tanouye, Kyle Nakayama
Child Care: Shirley Miyake

January 12, 2013

Lay Reader: Jean Pierre Thoma
Flowers: Kay Kawachika, Mary Ann Katayama
Child Care: Millie Uchima

Day 19 of Advent

Kona Christmas

Scripture: If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13.

I was part of a Christian family growing up in Kona. It still is a mystery to me but our parents were Christians and, therefore, we were all of the same belief. We had a huge family and a similar-sized farm to care for so Christmas took on a special meaning for us.

Let me explain: we had a Christmas "tree" - a pine branch which had a Christmasy aroma adorned by the girls with makeshift ornaments. My oldest sister made some treats to match the spirit of the time.

Most of our Asian neighbors were Buddhists and in my youthful ignorance, I wondered why they had Christmas trees in their homes, exchanged Christmas cards and gifts and practiced other Christian rituals. (And they got off from school during Easter and Christmas vacations, too!) Ah, the innocence of youth!

Holualoa Congregational Church was where we learned the religious aspects of an otherwise secular Christmas. From kindergarten to grade 12 we learned and participated in the telling and re-telling of the Christmas story. To us kids, the best part was the last (secular) part of the evening when Santa came bringing gifts for everyone - especially bags of hard candy, nuts and mainland fruit.

The gifts, pageantry, singing of traditional carols, Santa Claus and other aspects of Christmas were great, but the

best part of the whole celebration was that we got a rare day off from the rigors of farm work. Christmas and attending Sunday School as kids and church services as adults were the only free time we had to enjoy.

For some strange reason, we were considered rich in material things compared to others. I suppose it was because we had other things besides coffee—flowers, fruits, vegetables, as well as animals, at a roadside stand to sell our products and more. I guess that while we were not really rich in material goods, we faced a rich upbringing. Christmas and the church played a special part in our lives—for all 13 of us.

While experiencing these early years, we had little time to reflect on these matters much less to know about them. But, over the years, as results of nature and nurture, we realized that these were formative years in our lives to be.

Our Task Master Pop used to preach to us daily with what we considered inane drivel - that among other things, God put us on this earth to help others. He practiced what he preached in limited ways as he had little free time after looking after our welfare. Mama reinforced his teachings in her quiet ways.

This was Christmas and Christianity in my early past, which lay the basic foundations of my life today. For better or worse, what I am today was shaped and determined many decades ago. Merry Christmas!

---Karl Kawahara



Drawing by Pastor Tom Olcott

DECEMBER PRAYER LIST: Birthday

Please pray for and send a greeting to these Birthday people

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|
| 21 | Tadaki, Lynn |
| 22 | Knell, Aaron |
| 25 | Nishida, Bessie
Takemoto, Setsuko |
| 29 | Knell, Jonah |

Weekly activities at your Church of the Holy Cross

- **Christmas Worship Sunday December 22**
- **Messiah Sing In** 3PM Sunday December 22 in the Sanctuary
- **Christmas Eve Candle Light Service** Tuesday December 24, 7:30 PM – refreshments and fellowship to follow service
- **Choir Practice** is at 8:30am in the Sanctuary on Sundays.
- **Sunday School** at 8:45am.
- **The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga** meets in the sanctuary on Sunday at 1:30 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.
- **The United Church of Christ, Pohnpei – Hilo** worships in the BF meeting room Sunday morning.
- **Samoa Church** worships at 12pm on Sundays.
- **Chuukese Congregational Church** worships in BF meeting room at 1pm Sunday.
- **Gentle Yoga** on break
- **Rhythm & Life exercise class** meets Tuesday at 3:30 p.m. (BF)
- **Bible Study** Wednesday on break
- **Prostate Cancer Support Group-2nd** Thursday of Every month at 12pm in Lounge
- **IYAA Bible Study** is held each Wednesday evening from 7:30 p.m.
- **Qi Goong exercise class** meets Friday morning 9-10:30 a.m. (BF)

Update on our Interim Pastor Mary Olney-Loyd

How time flies. It seems it was just yesterday that we asked Mary Olney-Loyd to serve as our interim pastor and she accepted. Now here we are just a little over two weeks until Mary and her husband Gary will be arriving in Hilo from Seattle on Friday January 3. She will be joining us in worship on Sunday January 5 when Reverend Buck will be our guest pastor. That Sunday as a church we will be doing our litany of welcome for her as she joins our Holy Cross family. Mary will not be officially on board until January 15, to give them some time to unpack, settle in and get oriented to Hilo and Holy Cross. We look forward to her first Sunday preaching on January 19.

A reprise of Newton Chu's Christmas Message

On December 24th, 1994, I reluctantly moved to Hilo, and I spent that Christmas Eve in this small little church, in this small little town 2500 miles away from my home. I was tired, I was sad, I was uncertain, and like Charlie Brown in Charlie Brown's Christmas show, I wondered what Christmas was all about. And you know, I learned over time that Linus was right, God was here waiting for me. For the past 19 years I have spent Christmas Eve with all of you in this place called Church of the Holy Cross. And, it has been a wonderful experience. From the warmth of the greetings, the singing of carols with candles, to the message of the gospel delivered by many different ministers, the essence has always been the same. The birth of our savior, Jesus Christ, in that manger in Bethlehem was a miracle and truly deserves our praise.

This past year we said "aloha" to many of our elders. Many of the people who greeted me and welcomed me to Holy Cross 19 years ago are no longer here sitting among us. And while I miss them all dearly, I appreciate the fact that we are still here. We are witnessing God's everlasting grace. During our short time on earth we have the opportunity to meet and share our faith with many other people. We need to treasure and appreciate that opportunity and experience. It is indeed special. This Christmas season we also will be celebrating this special occasion without a senior pastor. Am I concerned? Not really, for I know that our faith is here to guide us like many, many generations of Holy Crossers in the past. Together, we anxiously await our next minister with great anticipation. But for now, we should simply join together as a community to continue our fellowship and worship, appreciate the opportunity to spend time with one another, and be kind to those around us. That is the spirit of Church of the Holy Cross, and that is why I love this place.

Merry Christmas, Peace and Love to you all.
Newton J. Chu

