

September 6, 2020



Aloha Family and Friends,

I hope this letter finds you well. It looks likely that the current stay at home order will be extended another two weeks, so we will be endeavoring to do as much business as possible online, including moving our council meeting

for this month onto zoom. Council members should have already received instructions on how to join and participate, but because members are always welcome to attend these meetings, you are also welcome to join. Contact me via email if you would like a zoom invite.

The renovation project continues. The fresh paint on the floors looks great and I think everyone will be amazed at the new bathrooms. Some other changes might not be as noticeable. The benches in the breezeway have been replaced and are as good as new. They have been painted to match so well you might not even notice that they are different at all unless you sat on them yourself.

Just a friendly reminder to stay active while we are under this stay at home order. A few of you have noted that you feel like you have lost a step or two lately because you have lost your normal exercise routines like going golfing or to the Y. Getting your exercise is an important part of staying healthy and keeping your immune system strong, so find some way to get those steps in. I know my mom gets up every morning and puts on her exercise clothes just to walk around their yard. It might sound silly, but getting that exercise in makes a difference.

Finally, I would like to call us all together for a moment of prayer this week on Saturday at noon. While we can't really meet together right now, I still think that it is important to set time aside to pray together. In the middle of a pandemic, this island and this world need our prayers more than ever. So set a reminder and take a moment before you sit down for lunch this Saturday to join with the rest of the Waipahu UCC in lifting our community up to God.

-Pastor Makana

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VIRTUAL CHURCH

LIVE Cast Sunday's at 9:30 am on our Facebook or Youtube page. Get there early Sunday with your 'ohana to worship with us! Can't make it? Catch the broadcast later in the day.



Repainted social hall floor

“Exodus Revealed: Just and True”

Readings: Exodus: 3:1-15

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, “I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.” Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’” God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.’ “This is my name forever, the name you shall call me from generation to generation.

We are continuing today in the Book of Exodus picking up largely where we left off last week. Moses, after seeking justice on his own terms, now finds himself in exile for killing an Egyptian oppressor. After spending years wandering in the desert, Moses happens upon a burning bush and encounters God speaking to him. It's a passage that I have read dozens of times, I have seen it and heard it in all forms of media. Whenever I see it, I always end up wishing that God would speak to me that clearly. I think that a lot of us feel like we are in the wilderness right now. Nobody saw this pandemic coming, and it has changed every one of us in one way or another. It has been a wave of destruction, almost like a wildfire. I can see Moses approaching that burning bush with a little bit of that concern. An uncontained wildfire can do a lot of damage, so a fire that burns without consuming is a strange thing that must be investigated.

This started off as just an ordinary work day, and since fleeing to Midian, Moses had been living an ordinary life as a shepherd. In the middle of this normality something extraordinary is revealed: Moses needs to take off his shoes because he is on holy ground. We spend a lot of time with our shoes off here in Hawaii, just about every time we go inside. So chances are you aren't wearing them now. But the place you are standing, or sitting, right now is holy ground for the same reason Mt. Horeb was: God is present. This is extra import for us to remember right now as we are unable to come together for normal Sunday worship in the sanctuary. God is still present where you are and no matter where you are, he is holy.

The response we should have to this holy presence in our lives doesn't need to be any different than that of Moses: “Here I am, Lord”. It's the same response that Samuel gives when as a child he hears the voice of the Lord. Whether you are a child, or of a mature age, like Moses was by the time he encounters the burning bush, the answer is the same: “Here I am, Lord”. Whatever work we are called

Continued from page 2...

to is animated by first answering God's call, not by trying to fit God's call into something else we are already doing. Trust that God will use who you are, because He has been shaping you for His work all your life. Moses had long wanted to see his people set free, but he did not see the ways he would be used. His vision was limited. God would take everything that he was and shape it for His purpose. All those years tending sheep in the desert would come in handy as he lead God's people in the wilderness.

God is present in every trial and in every wilderness experience. In that moment at the burning bush, God makes a statement for all time: That he is the God of Abraham, Issac and Jacob, "I AM that I AM". Abraham, Issac and Jacob would have been the three common ancestors of all the Israelites. Someone like Joesph would have been a hero, but Abraham, Issac and Jacob stood for everyone, not just the special people. Perhaps you feel overshadowed in your life by family members with huge legacies. I know even at this church the stories of the people the founded and built the church can loom large, but God is the God of all people and when He says that "I AM that I AM", it reminds us that He is with us for all time, and in all places. That He is not just the god of the people of the mountain, or the god of the ocean, or the god of the afterlife like many ancient cultures, including the Egyptians, believed, but He is and He is the God of all people. His relationship with our ancestors extends even today in His goodness towards every generation. God is not far away, He is with you now.

COMMUNION:

Wherever we have encountered God, our burning bush experiences, know that He is present with us at this communion table. Like Moses, we have left the trappings of our old life and have embraced God's son.

With Christians around the world and throughout the centuries, we gather around these symbols of bread and wine—simple elements that speak of nourishment and transformation; Resurrection

We remember on the night when Jesus and the disciples had their last meal together, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples, saying "This is my body, which is broken for you. Take and eat it, and as often as you do, remember me." [Distribution of the bread.]

In the symbol of the broken bread, we participate in the body of Christ and dedicate ourselves to being his disciples. In the same way he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to the disciples, saying: "Drink this, all of you. This cup is the new covenant, poured out for you and for many Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. [Distribution of the wine.]

In the symbol of the cup, we participate in the new life that Christ brings, cleansed of sin. We gather around these symbols of bread and wine—simple elements that speak of nourishment and transformation; Resurrection

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