



WAIPAHU UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE OUTLOOK

*Rev. David Makana Milotta,
Senior Minister*



WUCC Newsletter

June 2019

Pastor's Message

Aloha All,

Our sermons this past month have been studying Acts. Every chapter is filled with accounts of the vibrancy of the early church. Do you ever wonder what it was that made the early church multiply so quickly? Was it their new found boldness in the Holy Spirit? Was it their dedication to acts of service? Was it the unity of the leadership? Maybe like me, you have noticed that, more often than not, answers just bring more questions rather than resolution.

This is happening in our home right now. Our four year old son has reached the age where every experience brings with it a flood of questions on increasingly complex topics, including theology. "How can Jesus fly?", "How come there are only three persons of the trinity? I like the number five better." It's fun to listen to our firstborn begin to think deeply. However, I didn't get the sense that our son was entirely satisfied with the answers he received. Our attempts to explain the Ascension of Christ and the Trinity left him with more questions and I don't blame him. I often feel the same way.

The process of asking questions is a healthy one; one that helps us grow in our faith. Christians have long lamented coming away from reading the Bible with more questions than answers. It can be frustrating not getting clear-cut responses from God to our big questions.

For example, the miracles of Jesus. We know miracles by their nature defy explanation. There is a mystery about them. For awhile it was fashionable among liberal theologians to theorize ways that the miracles of the gospel might have happened without supernatural intervention. They would say, in their grasps for logic, that Jesus didn't feed the 5,000 by somehow conjuring food from nowhere. Instead, Jesus' actions inspired those in the crowd to share the food they had already had, because of course they really had enough food to go around as long as everyone was willing to share. (Apparently getting people to share was seen as a more plausible miracle.) And what about miraculous returns on investments? When Jesus tells the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30, the faithful stewards are able to double the money they are entrusted with over the course of a business trip by way of high risk investments. Every time I read that parable I am desperate for more information. Supernatural stewardship? Can I get a stock tip also please? How exactly could they manage to double their money so readily?

The early church also experienced dramatic growth. We could call it miraculous. In Acts 2:47 we see, "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." We look at that and say wow! This kind of multiplication of the faithful seems no less miraculous than feeding the 5,000 with a few loaves and fishes; yet in Acts this "miracle" comes from nothing more than the church being the church. And you won't see a manual being written detailing how to get these results in your church or your food bank outreach ministry anytime soon because there isn't a foolproof 1st century A.D. recipe to growth in the Spirit. The Spirit of God is with us to do and act in us in every age according to the will of God; acts seemingly mundane, and acts that are miraculous. I think the 20th century liberal theologians had a good point; these lessons of the Bible are indeed given to us to inspire us to do more. To act. But a greater truth must also be remembered: any actions we commit to are done through God's supernatural power. Through him, abiding in him, these efforts bear fruit. We cannot fully explain God's miracles, investments, work nor compel Him to act according to our will. Rather, let us feel compelled to join in his good work today.



Pastor Makana

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Waipahu United Church of Christ

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Church Council

Cora and I are just back from a 30 day cruise including parts of South Africa, West Africa, Spain and England. The trip included countries trying to develop their economies in a manner similar to the USA to provide for the welfare of their people. If you think about it, the United States has the government structure that allows people to work, learn and live with rights to have the religious belief they prefer, retain most of what they earn and own, including money, property and to live as they may pretty much prefer as long they do not infringe on rights of others.

These rights are documented in the US Constitution, federal, state and local statute and have been administered by law enforcement and the armed forces of the United States. Those people who often place their personal welfare on the line on our behalf. It is proper for us to recognize and honor those people on Memorial Day for the sacrifices over the life of this country. Rights are also protected by each citizen who participates in the government by voting, and otherwise participating in the system, so let's honor those individuals to try to better this country.

Congratulations to all of our graduates. Continue to learn as much as you can. The growth you experience will serve you well in the future enabling you to do almost anything you want to do. The more knowledge you accumulate, the more versatile a person you will be. Best wishes for your continued success.

Father's Day is the day we honor all of the fathers. Take the time to recognize them for all they do for your families.

Many thanks to members of the Church Council, Boards and Committees who volunteer their time to keep the many functional areas of the church running. We are very fortunate to have so many of you giving generously to assist in the services, maintaining our facilities, and taking care of office functions, etc.

Please keep up with the church calendar for upcoming events.

God bless you and keep you well.

Aloha,

Wayne Oshiro

Board of Trustees

Aloha Everyone from your Board of Trustees.

We have been busy trying to get our grounds in good shape following a season of heavy rains. We "tested" out our newly purchased wood chipper on some of the Hong Kong Orchid tree branches and were amazed at how little was left after cutting. We weren't able to completely finish chipping everything and that's why you'll see remnants near the culvert. We'll have to clean that up on our next scheduled work day.

This week we met with a contractor to start the process of repairing/replacing our lights on the property. I don't know when was the last time these lights were ever on, but with all the usage we have during the weeknights and whenever the Community Center is hosting a party it makes safety sense to get these working again. We're also looking at installing lights near both parking lots. Those lights will probably not be drawing electricity but have their own solar panels and operate solely on solar energy. These two projects will take time as we will be obtaining bids from at least two contractors, and then we'll have to go through the proper approval channels. Stay tuned.

Our assisted hearing devices in the sanctuary seem to be well received and have been working pretty well for the last several months. If you are one of the people who uses one and finds out it is not working properly, please let one of the ushers know immediately. Most of the time we just need to change the battery.

Well that's it for now.

God Bless-Mark H. Felmet-Chair

Board of Deacons

Aloha everyone!

I like to start with prayers of thank you.

"Thank you Lord for your unexpected surprise and blessing! Even when we don't ask, You are always faithful and on time.

Thank you God for blessing us endlessly.

Thank you for saving us in our worst times.

Thank you for nourishing our body and our mind so our faith can be strengthened.

Thank you for our families and friends who make life more meaningful.

Thank you Lord. Amen"

I say this because I have so much to be thankful for. This past weekend (May 17th, 2019) my sister got married and for the first time all five of my siblings are together in one place. It's been over 20 years. My sister has always wanted Pastor Roller to officiate her wedding and she got her wish. We talked about old memories and all the silly things we did. There was many relationships that healed and encouraged us to be better. Forgiveness was painful for some of us. Yet, it was accomplished through a willing heart. The moment is surreal and priceless. Although our family are not perfect, with faith and God's guidance there's nothing we can't do. Be blessed be kind.

Leang Smith

Board of Deacon



Board of Christian Education

Aloha,

This month, the Board of Christian Education will be hosting vacation Bible school on Saturday, June 29 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Snacks will be provided. If you are interested in registering, please email wucc@hawaii.rr.com or call (808) 677-3317. We are also looking for volunteers who would like to help at either session! If you'd like to volunteer, please talk to me or Veronica at church.

We look forward to a wonderful summer of rest and relaxation!

Blessings,

Jackie

Social Action

A Word of Thanks from the Social Action Committee...

On Saturday, May 11th, the church opened up its Community Center to our neighbors for a Church-sponsored lunch...and they came! And we had more than enough help, and because of our Church's generous support of this lunch, we did not have to charge anyone to come here. Mahalo to Irene for distributing flyers to the two high-rise towers across the street and over 75 persons signed up. We had plenty of food, and help setting up and decorating the tables (thanks Jackie, Jenny, Leatrice and others)...two hours before the event! We were also blessed to have the Happy Ohana provide a wonderful variety of songs, both vocal and instrumental...along with hula, too! Mike Minikawa also brought along some "Feats of Illusion" that wowed the crowd...me, included! And to complete the meal, Clarence and Lynn Nishihara served cake for all of us to enjoy!

One error we made was forgetting to invite our single seniors of our church (some came) that would have supported our goal to reach out to "the community", and "our community"!

Unbeknownst to us, the Pearl City Lions also showed up unannounced, to help set up the tables which got the whole job done in 10 minutes or less!

On behalf of the Social Action Committee, Emi Kitashiro, Clarence Nishihara, Jackie Kojima and Sachi Fujita, we thank the church for helping us reach out as we should! It turned out to be a great gathering, as a "family" around a bountiful table!...just as it was the last time we did the same thing at Thanksgiving with the help from Ko Olina.

Mahalo, Tom Fujita, chairperson for the Social Action Committee

ANNOUNCEMENTS

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER?

We'll be forming an inquirer's class for those interested in sharing our questions and our faith, discussing the roots of this church and the UCC, and how we get things done in service to God's will. Let **the Deacons, Pastor Makana or Cecile** know if you're interested.

CHURCH WORK DAY SCHEDULE for the year.

Second Saturday of the months at 8:00 a.m. **June 8, July 13, Aug. 10, Sept. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 9 & Dec. 14, 2019.** Please mark those dates on your calendar. Thank you!

COMMUNITY SERVICE:

Hawaii Food-Bank, food drop; every 3rd Tuesday; next event is **Tuesday, June 18, July 16, Aug. 20, Sept. 17, Oct. 15, Nov. 19 & Dec. 17, 2019** at 7:30 a.m. at the Senior Apartments. Please come out and help distribute food to the seniors. Mahalo!

Chancel Choir: Just a reminder: Choir practices every Sunday at 9:00 a.m. in David's Den. It's never too late to join us in music, fellowship and fun! Mahalo, Alika and Jackie.

Continuation from the Social Concerns Committee,

Last month, I challenged us “*to see where our church can become a more caring presence*”.

And we did it!...We became a community reaching out to our neighbors in the high-rise complex across the street, and over 75 persons signed up and were fed (along with our helpers and even the Friday Crew) that were there that day.

And I thought to myself: “What could possibly top this event?”...and the answer came from the most un-suspecting place: from Family Promise! Yes, it is the same Family Promise that has worked with many of our United Church of Christ churches, such as Central Union, Nu`uanu Congregational Church, UCC Judd Street, and more lately, with Manoa Valley UCC. I have worked with FP for close to 30 years and someone called them “The Gold Standard” for effective ministry among those trying to improve their lot in life.

Family Promise partners with existing churches to feed and house up to four families for one week, four times a year. Someone from the church stays overnight with these families to answer questions, others from the church provide an evening meal and sometimes a simple breakfast in the morning. The FP van comes at 6:30 AM to pick up the families and take them to work (for those with jobs) and others are transported to the Family Center in Wahiawa for job training, and children are also transported to their schools. At the Center, there are provisions for showers, and even some clothing, if needed.

I am hoping the Council will give us the green light, as we discern if this is a possible program for our church, we might also start a dialogue about how this might work for us, as a way for our church to become “*a more caring presence..*”

In other news, we are fortunate to have Senator Clarence Nishihara in our committee as he helps us find interesting topics to keep us “informed”. We talked about a possible speaker on Disaster Training, the Targeting of Seniors for Fraud, and Personal Safeguards to prevent falls, or injuries. Also, we looked at the different ways we can prepare for the inevitable event of Tsunamis, hurricanes or even storm surges that can cripple our infrastructure, and leave us without power or water, or both! How will your family survive if you were left on your own? What can you do to keep you and your family alive for a week?, or two weeks? Look for announcements in the coming weeks as we look at ways to keep our families alive!

And special kudos for those who have supported our on-going canned goods drive each month!...and to those who stepped up to make our first WUCC Community Lunch such a success! It is proof, that we are a church that cares...and a church that Does!...and it makes a Difference, Yes, indeed! Yes, Indeed!

And as a postscript, I will be off-island for the months of June, July and August, but will be here in the middle of the week, most of the time. I know the Social Concerns Committee will “Hele On”... even when I am not here, for such is the nature of a caring church!

Faithfully, Tom Fujita, Social Concerns Chairperson

Grey Thumb

We have so many sayings in American culture about how hard it can be to try new things: “can't teach a dog new tricks”, “if it ain't broke don't fix it”, and “a leopard can't change its spots.”

Well a leopard may not be able to truly change its spots, but the truth is humans change all the time. According to research, “the body replaces itself with a largely new set of cells every seven years to 10 years, and some of our most important parts are revamped even more rapidly.” So no matter what the mirror tells you, we are constantly changing.

And that is why I am delighted, but not totally surprised that after a year my black thumb, for all things gardening, is turning grey. I have plants in my yard flourishing. Hurray!

It wasn't magic though. A menchune didn't sneak into our yard at night shoo away the stray cats and tend my garden woes. The languishing roses, sooty molded ixora, neglected double rose pikake and tired straw colored grass we inherited when we got the house needed some tender loving care. I was at a total loss so I decided to join a group of garden enthusiasts and the keiki and I got to work. They gently guided us when we had questions. Apparently, our roses needed pruned, fertilized and mulched, our ixora needed weekly soap/oil treatments, and our double rose pikake and our grass primarily just needed more water. The plants are not golf course beautiful yet, but they are slowly looking happier and lush as God intended them. The kids and I are enjoying this time together so much that we branched out and planted some cherry tomatoes, herbs and the boys are propagating succulents and plumeria. Who would have thought something so nebulous of an idea in our minds as gardening, could be so fun and relaxing?

Our spiritual lives work the same way. It isn't magic. Sometimes we get busy in life or concerned about other things and our faith gets cobwebby, or our prayer life is moldy and our bible reading more and more neglected, we aren't reaching out to others like before and our hearts just feel dry. It can feel overwhelming to look at our inner life and think, I don't even know where to start. But you can turn to God the Master Gardener at any moment when your fed up, and his group of enthusiasts, your church family, and know that with a little TLC that dryness will be just a memory.

Here is some gardening advice I have adapted from my group:

Start small. Just get back to the basics with a prayer of commitment.

Crack open the Bible. Start with one of the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.

Join a group of enthusiasts and share life together. Grow in a church family.

Just like learning to garden, the vehicle for change is always present. We just have to ask, reach out and take it. God is always ready with his skilled hands to help make our hearts lush again.

--- Veronica Milotta

*The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your bones. You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail. Isaiah 58:11*



Dedication to Rename the Community Center

The J. Tokuo Yoshida Community Center

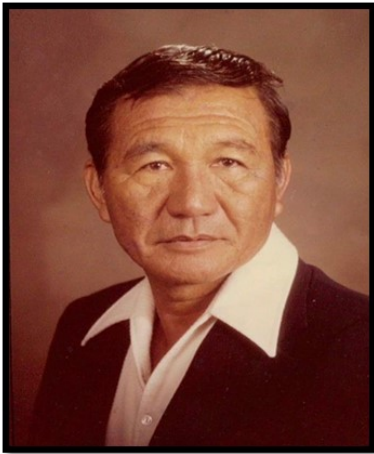
Join us at 10:45 am
Sunday, July 14, 2019
Waipahu UCC

The Parish Hall, Tokuo built in 1948, presently called the Community Center, will be named in honor of Tokuo Yoshida for all the work he has done for the Church. Join us for a program and light lunch after the Church Service on Sunday, July 14, 2019.



RSVP: Call the Church Office (808 677-3317); email ceci-legoo@hawaii.rr.com; or respond at the sign in at the Church foyer before Sunday Worship Service starting June 16th.

In 1948, the Reverend Hiro Higuchi approached Tokuo, who was only 28 years old, to be the general contractor to build the Parish Hall. The Parish Hall, dedicated in March 1950, was the beginning of Waipahu Community Church on the 2.75 acre-property on Mokuola Street. It served as a sanctuary and social hall from 1950 to 1979. When the Reverend Higuchi returned to Waipahu, Tokuo was asked to build the sanctuary; it was completed in 1979.



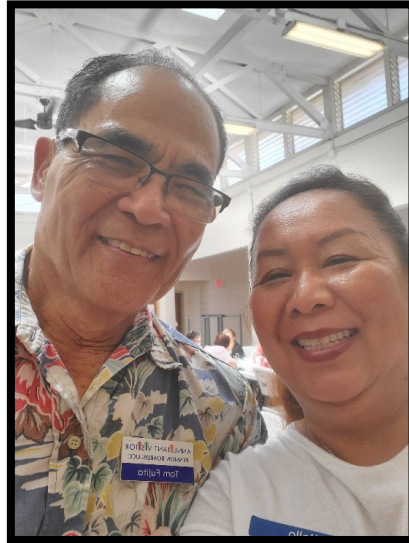
Joseph Tokuo Yoshida was born on January 16, 1920 in Waipahu and worked as a carpenter and general contractor and owner of T. Yoshida Contractor. His contributions to the Church were numerous---after building the Parish Hall in 1948, he built the Sanctuary in 1979, parking lot in 1988; and bell tower in 2003---all at no charge for himself as the general contractor and carpenter. He passed away at the age of 98 on November 18, 2018.

May Memories



Community Luncheon

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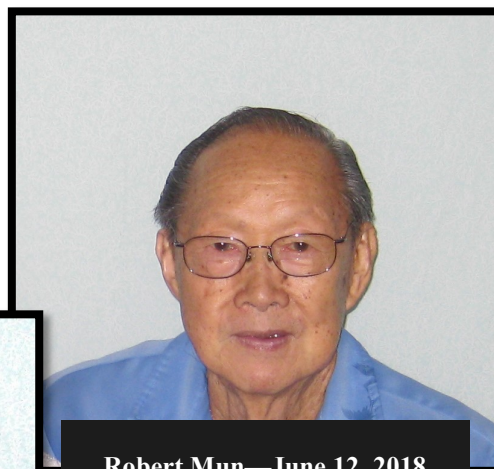


In loving memory of our love one...

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Florence Jang—
May 24, 2018



Robert Mun—June 12, 2018



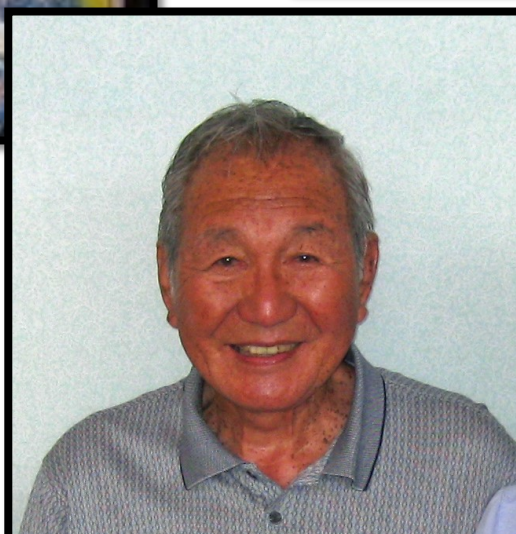
Amy Sakuma—September 4, 2018



Hoyt Parker—June 14,
2018



Louis Fong—
September 6, 2018



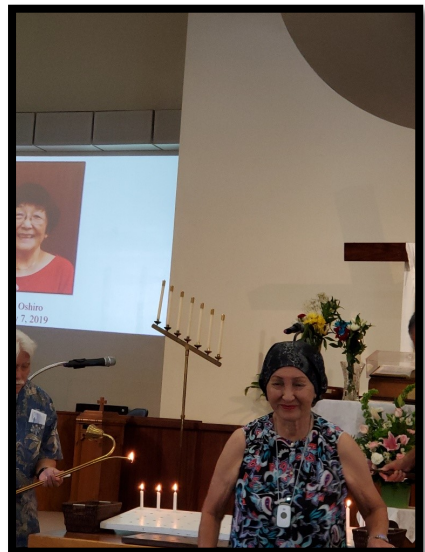
Tokuo Yoshida—November 18, 2018



Sally Oshiro—January 7, 2019

Memorial Day Service

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Waipahu United Church of Christ
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DATES TO REMEMBER

- Every Sunday is: 9:30 a.m. Sunday Worship
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- First Sunday is: 9:30 a.m. Communion Sunday
- Sunday, June 2 11:00 a.m. Board of Christian Education Meeting
- Saturday, June 8 8:00 a.m. Church Work Day
- Sunday, June 9 10:30 a.m. Social Action Meeting
- Tuesday, June 11 ~ Kamehameha Day * Office Closed ~
- Sunday, June 16 9:30 a.m. Dad & Grad's Day Celebration
- Tuesday, June 18 5:30 p.m. Board of Trustees Meeting
- 7:30 a.m. Food Drop at the Senior Apartments
- Wednesday, June 19 10:00 a.m. Pule Ohana - Prayer Ministry
- Thursday, June 20 4:00 p.m. Church Council Meeting
- Sunday, June 23 11:00 a.m. Board of Deacons Meeting
- Saturday, June 29 10:45 a.m. Vacation Bible School