



IAO UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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Aloha My Beloved House Churches & 'Ohana!

I hope that you and your families are doing well and staying safe from this unsee-able virus. Please know that I hold you in my daily prayers and think about all of you as we close out the first half of 2020. What a journey it has been, and I am anticipating that we will all be staying on this journey for a while longer.

After much prayer and discernment, our Church Council and I have concluded that we will continue with our online and 88.1 FM radio station Virtual Worship Services until further notice.

If we were to open up the sanctuary, there will be a lot of steps that need to happen – sanitizing before and after every worship service, social distancing of six (6) feet, no Aloha Hour, no hymn or choral singing (except for a soloist), masks must be worn, limited amount of people in the sanctuary at one time, just to name a few. With this in mind, we concluded that we would rather have you safe at home experiencing virtual worship through our Facebook Live feed and the use of our 88.1 FM radio station than potentially expose you to this virus. Your lives and your health are more important to us than a building at this time. We will keep everyone informed as things progress, but to be honest with you, it may be a while before we can safely gather in the sanctuary.

In the meantime, as we continue with our Virtual Worship experiment, we will make necessary adjustments from our end. If you have any suggestions on how we can make things better, please do not hesitate to let me know. One thing we can count on is that our Virtual Worship will remain even after we open our sanctuary. We have expanded our 'ohana in our virtual world, so we now have people joining our worship services from the U.S. mainland, Brazil, Guatemala, Africa, Micronesia, and many other places around the world.

Another project that we have taken on as a church is the sharing of personal hygiene items and non-perishable food. Because of your generosity and our partnerships with local agencies who have jumped on board in helping us feed our families in need, the first week we did this we were able to distribute food to nine (9) families. This week, we were able to give food bags to twenty-two (22) families. I am asking for your continued support in donating personal hygiene items and non-perishable food. We have placed boxes outside the office (Fujitimo Hall) at the upper parking lot for you to drop off your donations.

We are experiencing what it means to be “The Church” through our “House Churches.” I encourage you to call one another and let us know if you need anything. Communicating with each other will be extremely vital for the long haul. Some churches on Maui and elsewhere in the state may open their buildings, but Iao UCC will remain focused and stay the course – until we know for certain that you and your families will remain safe from the COVID-19 virus. Lastly, for your convenience you may use the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope to mail in your tithes and pledges for the month of June. We have also attached the “Strengthen the Church” envelopes and information as we begin our Pentecost season; as a UCC congregation, we continue to be in solidarity with our sister UCC churches all across the country.

Blessings with lots of love and appreciation. Pray for your Pastor – for he misses your hugs!

Rev. Floren “Tino” C. Cordova, Pastor