

A Monthly Newsletter of Iao United Church of Christ

2371 W. Vineyard St., Wailuku, HI 96793-1626

February 2017

Wally's Window



On Sunday, February 26th, I will conduct my final worship service as interim pastor at Iao United Church of Christ. Unless there are any surprises on February 19, when the Rev. Florentino Cordova meets the congregation

and conducts service, he will be in place as your new settled pastor beginning March 1. I commend the search committee for doing excellent, timely work in following the Spirit's leadership in finding the one they feel God is calling to provide pastoral leadership for you.

It will be difficult for me to say goodbye to you. I have made some deep and lasting friendships in my time here. I have not always done right by you, but I have done my best. In looking back at my ministry – I will celebrate my fiftieth year of ordained ministry this month – I can honestly say I have left every congregation in which I have served with a sense of fulfillment. God has truly blessed me!

The Bible is filled with words of farewell. I can think of so many: there's Moses' protracted farewell speech to the people of Israel, Elijah's passing the mantle to Elisha, Simeon's *nunc dimittis*, and of course, Jesus' farewell discourse. These passages speak so eloquently to our need as human beings to say goodbye, and not simply fade away into a dark night. Perhaps, though, what speaks to my sentiments in my leaving, are Paul's words to the Philippian Christians: *I thank God for every remembrance of you*. And I do.

Moderator's Memo

Aloha...

I hope all is well with all of you and your ohana. The health of lao UCC is in good shape, thanks to Pastor Wally and all our church communities helping to keep things going. The following is a list of this month's activities on our busy campus:

• The B&G is asking for help in renovation and repairs of the lao Parsonage at 2351 Main Street. They are preparing it for occupation by our new settled pastor. Work days are on Saturdays—Feb. 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th. Please come by and help whenever you can and for as long as you are able.



- Rev. Tino will arrive in mid-February (see letter from the Search Committee on page 3). We will meet him with a welcome "pupu" potluck in Kanda Hall on <u>Sat., Feb. 18th</u> from 5-6:30 p.m. You will also have a chance to meet Rev. Tino's partner, Rong Bi. Rev. Tino will preach on <u>Sunday, Feb. 19th</u> and on the same morning we will call a congregational meeting to vote on accepting Rev. Tino as our settled pastor. Please come to hear his sermon and also to have your say in this important vote.
- Iao Preschool's annual **Family Fun Fair** will be held on Saturday, Feb. 25th starting at 7 a.m., on our entire campus. If you have any gently-used items, please donate them for the rummage sale. If you have time available to help out during the Fun Fair, please let Fley Iniba, the Preschool director, know. Any help is greatly appreciated.
- Pastor Wally's last sermon will be on Sunday, Feb. 26th. It is with mixed feelings that we will say goodbye to him. We were getting very comfortable with his leadership and guidance. God has called him to do another internship on O'ahu starting in March. Pastor Wally requested PIES for list last Sunday, and PIES it will be! Please join us for Aloha Hour to share pies and fellowship with him, as we say thank you and goodbye.

Lastly, we thank the Settled Pastor Search Committee for their hard work and diligence in securing Rev. Tino to be our new pastor. After months of work going over dozens of profiles, they were led to select Rev. Tino. Let us begin our new journey with open hearts, minds, and hands, as we share a spiritual life to do God's work as a community of faith.

Peace be with you, Gail Ideue, Moderator

February Lectionary

Feb 55th Sun. after Epiphany
Isaiah 58:1-9a, (9b-12)
Psalm 112:1-9
1 Corinthians 2:1-12
Matthew 5:13-20
Restoring Beauty

Feb 12 6th Sun. after Epiphany Deuteronomy 30:15-20

Psalm 119:1-8 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 **Matthew 5:21-37** From the Heart

Feb 19 7th Sun. after Epiphany

Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18 Psalm 119:33-40 1 Corinth. 3:10-11, 16-23 **Matthew 5:38-48** *Expanding Boundaries*

Feb 26 Last Sun. after Epiphany

Exodus 24:12-18 Psalm 2 or Psalm 99 2 Peter 1:16-21 **Matthew 17:1-9** Dazzling Reign

The lesson in **bold** is the focus of both the message of the day and any Sunday School lesson; and the italicized title is the theme for the Sunday service. \bullet





Sunday after Sunday, the sanctuary is graced (pun intended!) with the elegant—one could even say, lyrical—floral compositions that Aunty Grace Murata brings. These organic offerings are a delight to the eye, the mind, and indeed, the spirit. Mahalo nui loa, Aunty Grace!

Febuary Worship Reader: Craig Bode

Feb. Worship Responsibilities*

Feb 5

Greeter/Usher: Betsy Scheller Head Usher: Daniel Kamidoi Usher: Alan Yamamoto Hostess: Gail Ideue Aloha Hour: Jane Akitake & Anne Hill

Feb 12 Aloha Hour: Lynette Shiroma & Lee Murakami

Feb 19 Aloha Hour: Linda Johannes & Youlida Yoruw

Feb 26

Aloha Hour: Maui Kosrae Etawi

* (same greeter, ushers and hostess for the whole month)

February Birthdays

- 2/6 Ruby Sakurada Lewis Hadley
- 2/7 Brett Yamane
- 2/9 Fred Araki
- 2/11 Rena Hayashi Cheryl Hadley
- 2/13 Annette Matsushima Suzette Robinson
- 2/14 Bradley Akitake
- 2/15 Goliad Johannes Richard Carr
- 2/18 John Yoruw
- 2/20 Jim Robinson
- 2/22 Deann Sonoda Betsy Hadley
- 2/23 Carole Toy Lynette Shiroma
- 2/25 Barbara Kusuda
- 2/27 Nahulu Nunokawa

Aloha Hour Supplies

For Aloha Hour, the Buildings and Grounds Team will have a plastic tub set up with supplies used. There will be supplies such as plates, cups, utensils, and napkins. This plastic tub will be located in Fujitomo Hall.

On Sundays, Aloha Hour hosts/hostesses are asked to bring the tub down from Fujitomo Hall and returned to the same location after. Please list on the tub any items needing re-stocking and the Team will make every effort to keep up with the inventory.

Iao UCC's Search for a Settled Pastor

TO: Iao UCC Congregation FROM: Iao UCC Search Committee DATE: February 1, 2017 RE: Call for Meeting of Iao UCC, February 19, 2017 to Vote on *Florentino Cordova* as Pastor

Eleven months ago, the members of this church entrusted the Search Committee with the responsibility of prayerfully selecting a candidate for your approval for our next pastor. We gathered input from many of you as we assembled our Local Church Profile. We carefully reviewed the Ministerial Profiles of 25 candidates. After checking references, we interviewed three candidates and watched videos of their preaching. We arranged to meet with and hear one candidate preach in person.

We unanimously selected—through prayer and mutual consent—<u>The Rev. Florentino (Tino) Cordova</u> as our candidate for next pastor of Iao UCC. Tino was raised as a Catholic in New Mexico. He served in the

US military and as an office manager for Veteran Affairs for three years. He then raised his two sons and was an associate pastoral leader, worship team leader, and treasurer for Liano Estacado Metropolitan Community Church in Clovis, NM. Feeling called to ordained ministry, he obtained a B.A. in Religious Studies from Edgewood College in Wisconsin. He then went to Pacific School of Religion, a UCC seminary in Berkeley, California, where he graduated in 2013. He also completed a chaplaincy residency at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center in Berkeley.

Pastor Tino served as a pastor in Watsonville, California. He led church members to healing where racism existed between church and neighbor, reengaged the youth, and helped the church to live as open and affirming. The church partnered with other congregations, built relationships with key community leaders and the police department, and helped the voice of youth to be heard in the community. The church became a central focal point of the community.



A lay member of Watsonville First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) wrote: "Reverend Tino is an excellent pastor who was committed to the wellness of a congregation and also possess the skills to channel his faith and motivate those in the pews. Reverend Tino leads first of all with faith, then with compassion and inclusion. He was successful in bringing the church back into the community and filling some critical needs."

Rev. Cordova has ministerial standing in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), a partner of the United Church of Christ that encourages Disciples pastors to search a call in the UCC and vice versa. If Rev. Tino is called to Iao UCC, he plans to establish himself on Maui while his partner Rong Bi visits from California until he completes his Master's Degree in engineering.

On the weekend of February 18-19, we will have opportunities for leaders and those who consider Iao UCC their church home to meet Rev. Tino and Rong. Members will vote on Rev. Tino as the next pastor of Iao UCC at an official church meeting following his leading worship on February 19. At the meeting, the Search Committee will report on its work, you may discuss the terms of the Call Agreement, and members vote on the recommendation to call Florentino Cordova as our new pastor.

We trust that you will feel the excitement for the possibilities of the leadership Rev. Tino brings. It is our hope that Tino will start with us in March 2017. We believe that God has led us to this exciting moment in our ministry . . . and so does Tino. We look forward to growing together as a faith community, serving others and proclaiming the good news of God's love. Thank you for the privilege you have given us.

The Iao UCC Pastoral Search Committee:

Dorothy Lester, Joshlyn Miteg, David Murata, Warren Orikasa Betsy Scheller, Youlida Yoruw & Tim Stewart (chair)



Please mark your calendars:

A Weekend With Our Prospective Pastor

<u>The Rev.</u> <u>Florentino Cordova</u>

Dinner and talk story (for church leaders and interested members) <u>Saturday, Feb. 18th</u> 5 p.m. @Kanda Hall

Then...

Rev. Tino will lead worship and preach <u>Sunday, Feb. 19th</u> 9:30 a.m. @the Sanctuary

Living in the Empire

Pastor Wally's sermon on the Fourth Sunday after Epiphany—Jan. 29, 2017

The Beatitudes. One of the most beloved passages from the Bible. When I had become a Christian in my freshman year of college, this was one of the first passages I was asked to memorize. During the evening service at that small Southern Baptist Church on Berendo Street in downtown LA, we were asked to recite from memory various passages from the Bible. In King James English, of course. Consequently, these opening verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew became very formative for me. They form the introduction to what is most commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus lays out some of the ethical and devotional life of his followers.

The Beatitudes are comforting words. Jesus offers words of blessing and who wouldn't want to be blessed by Jesus. You often hear these words as consolation at funerals. It is comforting, after all, to receive a blessing from Jesus.

The word "bless," even though it has become part of our everyday language, has always, for me anyway, retained a kind of nebulous quality. What did Jesus intend when he pronounced blessing on the poor in spirit, mourners, meek ones and the rest?

Having lived in the southern states for a few years, I remember my southern friends often respond to some kindness, favor or gesture by saying, *well, bless your heart!* It was their way of expressing gratitude. That probably was not Jesus' intention. Some modern translations of the Greek word *markaroi* substitute the word "happy" for blessed. For example, "Happy are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." I don't think that is what Jesus intended either.

To me, to understand what is intended, we must look at why the gospel writer Matthew placed the Beatitudes here in the narrative of the beginning of Jesus' ministry. Consider what Matthew has Jesus doing before. Following Jesus' birth, we find the mysterious visit of the magi from the east to worship the baby, a passage only found in this gospel. Matthew uses this to announce that the coming of the Jewish messiah has universal implications beyond Judaism. Then we have the horrible story of the slaughter of the infants by the tyrant Herod, again only found in this gospel. Matthew signals here that the powers of the empire, the rulers of earthly kingdoms, will look upon the radical message of the reign of God as threatening and will use all the powers available, namely the brute force of the military, as a means to eliminate any who will oppose. The gospel writer then skips over Jesus' growing up years until we find Jesus as a young prophet. There we find the violent story of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness.

The significance of the temptations is clear: the Tempter tells Jesus that he has the potential to use extraordinary force, superior to the powers of the empires of the world, to accomplish his ends: supernatural powers, extravagant wealth, and other means to attract followers to overthrow the empire. Jesus resists the tempter's power and in a moment of clarity emerges from the desert knowing who he is and what God is calling him to be and do. He calls his first disciples, as we saw last week, not with promises of great power and overwhelming rewards of prestige and material wealth, but simply with the challenge that they are to bring people to an understanding of the ways of God. That's where Matthew leaves us before we find the pronouncement of blessing.

If you look at the Beatitudes in this broader context, you can see that Matthew is trying to tell us readers that this is not business as usual. I would go so far as to say that Matthew is insisting that Jesus' presence signals something radically different, diametrically opposed to the cultural, social, and religious norms of the day. Jesus came to turn the world upside down, if you follow his way.

To be blessed, then, means that you will receive a nod of the head from Jesus, an amen from God. Conversely, it also means, then, if everything I said before is true, that you will receive a

shake of the head, a look of condemnation from the citizens of the empires of this world, reason being you must be doing something wrong, according to them. The world of the disciple is an upside down one.

Logically then, you must be doing something wrong if you are successful, according to the criteria by which the world measures success. Just look at the list of those whom Jesus pronounces blessed: the

poor in spirit (Luke says "poor" rather than poor in spirit), mourners, meek, those who hunger and thirst in righteousness, merciful, pure in heart, peacemakers, those persecuted for doing the right thing, those who are reviled for following Jesus, the persecuted. That's not a list that one aspires to, is it?

And yet, Jesus says that if you're on that list, you must be doing something right. And being on that list puts you on a pretty elite list for, as Jesus observes, the empire put the prophets on that list.

Let's look at one of the Beatitudes as an example. Jesus tells us, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." The word "meek" conjures up for many of us the James Thurber character Walter Mitty. Mitty stands for the prototypical meek and mildmannered character who has an active fantasy life, in which he sees himself as everything he isn't, but wants to be. Walter Mitty is not what Jesus meant by meek. Rather Jesus' meek who shall inherit the earth are those who intentionally aspire to a set of values diametrically opposed to how "successful" people live: assertive, grab the world by the throat, run over whoever is in your way, the way of the empire. That set of values of the meek? The chase for material things leads to self-destruction. True power is spiritual. People matter more than things. Love and not dominance governs true relationships. Seek God and you will have what you need. That's the definition of inheriting the earth.

This is why I believe the Beatitudes is one of the most radical documents you can ever read. It is not intended to comfort, but to inspire and encourage you to a bolder, more courageous, countercultural way of life. But live it and you will find the real meaning of life for which God has created you. Bless your hearts!

> I added this footnote to the sermon this morning. With the news that President aka emperor Trump has decreed that we shall accept no refugees from certain handpicked mainly Muslim countries for four months. I have no doubt that we live in the empire. The names have changed since the biblical stories were written, the seats of power have moved to other continents, the weapons of choice have grown more lethal, the death dealing machines have evolved into a more impersonal, repulsive nature, but the empire lives.

And even as antithetical as the ways of the empire were to those of God and his messiah back then, they are equaled by our emperors today. Whether they are named Assad, or Putin, or Trump, the emperor has no clothes. They are dealers of injustice and deserve the harshest condemnation from us who call ourselves Christians. This is not the way our Scriptures demand we treat strangers and aliens in our midst. Just think what would have happened if Pharaoh sent Joseph, Mary and the infant Jesus back to Palestine. Even that emperor had more compassion than our president, and I am ashamed. If we do not stand up to the empire and act for justice then we are derelict in our calling to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God. May we have the boldness to stand with these, the marginalized and oppressed, our calling and God's way.

God is with us. Thanks be to God.



lao Preschool's 2017 Ohana Fun Fair



Henry Opukaha'ia Scholarship Fund

Henry Opukaha'ia, born in the year 1792, was one of the first native Hawaiian to become Christian, inspiring American Protestant missionaries to come to the islands during the 19th century. Unfortunately, he died at a young age of 26 from typhus fever while studying in Connecticut



before he could return to Hawaii to preach to his people.

The Hawaii Conference United Church of Christ started a scholarship fund in honor of Henry Opukaha'ia to support the training of clergy for Christian mission. The Stewarding Community humbly ask for your donation to the Henry Opukaha'ia Scholarship Fund. Envelopes for this fund will be placed on the table in the back of the sanctuary during the month of February. Your contribution to the Henry Opukaha'ia fund will be greatly appreciated.

Mahalo from the Stewarding Community!

Calendar of events for the 1st quarter of 2017...

Mo.	Day	Event	Community	
Jan	8-14	Habitat for Humanity gp.	B&G	Habitat gp. (Collegiate Challenge, UC Berkeley) @Kanda
	16	Martin Luther King Day		Office and Preschool closed
	29	Annual Meeting	Council	All-church meeting after service
Feb	12	Opukahaia Sunday	Worshiping	Special service honoring Henry Opukaha'ia
	25	Church Leader's Workshop	Council	1-day conference on Oahu, @ Central Union Church
	25	IPS Fun Fair	IPS	Iao Preschool all-day fundraising event
Mar	1	Ash Wednesday	Worshiping	Joint worship with WUC and Ka'ahumanu Churches
	4-11	Habitat for Humanity gp.	B&G	Habitat gp. (Collegiate Challenge, Regis Univ.) @Kanda
	17-18	The Bible & Homosexuality	Council	Workshop/Seminar hosted by lao UCC

February 2017 Iao United Church of Christ

Senday	Monday	Tresday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jam 2017 <u>8</u> M T W T 1 2 3 4 5 8 9 10 11 12 15 16 17 18 19 22 23 24 25 20 29 30 31	6 7 2 13 14 5 6 9 20 21 12 13 6 27 28 19 20	Mar 2017 T W T F S 1 2 3 4 7 8 9 10 11 14 15 16 17 18 21 22 23 24 25 28 29 30 31	/ 9:15 AM -10:30 AM Al Anon (K) 1:30 PM -4:00 PM Atter-school tutoring (K) 6:00 PM Maui Kosrae Etawi (S)	2 6:15 PM -7:45 PM Choir (S) Groundhog Day	3 6:00 PM Kosraen Women's Fellowship (S) Office Closed	4 8:00 AM -3:00 PM Iao Parsonage workday 7:30 PM AA (K)
5 6:00 PM YOUTH GROUP Theme: Restoring Beauty	6 2:00 PM -4:00 PM Atter-school tutoring (K)	7 5:00 PM WORSHIPPING (F) 7:00 PM -8:30 PM Maui Choral Arts	8 9:15 AM -10:30 AM Al Anon (K) 1:30 PM -4:00 PM Atter-school tutoring (K) 5:30 PM FINANCE (F)	9 6:15 PM -7:45 PM Choir (S)	10 6:00 PM Kosraen Women's Fellowship (S) Office Closed	11 8:00 AM -3:00 PM Iao Parsonage workday 7:30 PM AA (K)
12 Opukahaia Sunday Theme: From the Heart	13 2:00 PM -4:00 PM Atter-school tutoring (K)	14 7:00 PM -8:30 PM Maui Choral Arts Valentine's Day	15 9:15 AM -10:30 AM Al Anon (K) 1:30 PM -4:00 PM Ater-school tutoring (K)	16 6:15 PM -7:45 PM Choir (S)	17 6:00 PM Kosraen Women's Fellowship (S) Office Closed	18 5:00 AM -3:00 PM leo Parsonage workday 5:00 PM Dinner w/ Rev. Tino & Rong (K) 7:30 PMAA(S)
19 9:30 AM Rev. Tino preaching 11:00 AM Stewarding Theme: Expanding Boundaries	20 2:00 PM -4:00 PM Atter-school tutoring (K) President's Day	21 7:00 PM -8:30 PM Maui Choral Arts	22 9:15 AM -10:30 AM Al Anon (K) 1:30 PM -4:00 PM Atter-school tutoring (K) 5:30 PM COUNCIL (F)	23 6:15 PM -7:45 PM Choir (S)	24 6:00 PM Kosraen Women's Fellowship (S) Office Closed	25 7:00 AM Iao Preschool Fun Fair (ALL DAY) 7:30 PM AA (K)
26 Theme: Dazzling Reign	27 2:00 PM -4:00 PM Atter-school tutoring (K)	28 7:00 PM -8:30 PM Maui Choral Arts				



Iao United Church of Christ 2371 W. Vineyard Street Wailuku, HI 96793-1626



The health of the church is most visible in the active work of its devoted members; here, that of the folks in the Worshipping Community, during a recent meeting at Fujitomo hall

Mailed February 8, 2017. Address Services Requested.



If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, check this box to mark as: "Return to Sender."

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Iao United Church of Christ 2371 W. Vineyard Street Wailuku, HI 96793–1626

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Sunday Worship	9:30 а.м.
Interim Pastor	Wally Kuroiwa
Moderator	Gail Ideue
Church Secretary	Lloyd Nebres
Preschool Director	Flerida Iniba
Choir Director & Pianist	Karyn Sarring

You are always welcome at lao United Church of Christ.