

Iao Pepa

Na Makani

A Monthly Newsletter of Iao United Church of Christ

2371 W. Vineyard Street, Wailuku | (808) 244-7353 | iaoucc@hawaiiantel.net

November–December 2020

Blessings from Pastor Tino | *“The Deployed Church of God”*

My deepest and warm wishes go out to our beloved Iao UCC House Churches, our deployed people of God and to all your families as we journey into our Advent, Blue Christmas and Christmas season. On behalf of all our staff, Lloyd, Karyn, Fley and all our Preschool Teachers, we would like to extend a very merry season's greetings to everyone.

What a year it has been for our Iao UCC Church and Preschool! We have met this new challenge with faith, courage, and resolve. Being able to change at a moment's notice requires a lot of ingenuity, teamwork, and the ability to trust one another to bring our spiritual gifts to meet the challenge – and that we have all done by the grace of God beloveds. The most important part of 2020 has been the importance of remaining an active and faithful church, by words and actions, to our mission, ministry and call in new and creative ways. We have set the foundation and now we work on how to expand our social media presence, and yet, keeping our local ministries going. The slogan that I read on a Facebook post and have taken on this year has been “the Church is *not* closed – it is on deployment.” Since March, we have all been deployed soldiers for Christ to meet head-on the challenges caused by this pandemic – feeding the poor, calling and checking in on our Kupuna, contributing to the needs of the houseless community, collaborating with other non-profits on Maui, all while expanding our social media presence.



As we journey into our season of Advent, the upcoming Epiphany reading in Isaiah 60 tells us how “darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples.” Many may feel that they are/have been living in darkness – loss of job, loss of a loved one, difficulty in putting food on the table, etc. I believe there are still many reasons to remain hopeful – recovering from the virus, vaccines working their way to our communities and people coming together to meet the needs of others. Many reasons to remain thankful – the gift of science given to our scientists, our doctors, nurses, and all our first responders. One thing that our communities could count on through all this is Iao UCC Church along with many other churches and supporters who have been steadfast in prayer and meditation. May we somehow be able to find peace and joy in the love we have shown one another through this crisis.

I look forward to a time in which I can hug each of you in person while sending virtual hugs to the many supporters out in our virtual world. I look forward in hearing the beauty of your voices and seeing the expressions on your faces as I fumble through some words in my message. I look forward to sharing a physical meal at God's holy table. But in the meantime – let us continue to “be the church” – deployed people of God for a world in great need of a Church that is alive and present.

Blessings with virtual hugs and prayers ~ **Rev. Tino Cordova**, Pastor

Virtual Worship Services at: facebook.com/iaoucc.maui

Photo: Pastor Tino & Rongchao
on Stewardship Sunday,
November 22, 2020

December Lectionary

Dec 6 **2nd Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

Messengers of Hope

Dec 13 **3rd Sunday of Advent**

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

1 Thess. 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Shouts of Joy

Dec 20 **4th Sunday of Advent**

2 Sam. 7:1-11, 16

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

Birthing A Promise

Dec 27 **1st Sun. after Christmas**

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

Long-Awaited Gift

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



FOUR GENERATIONS

Baby Liam is being held by gamma Shannon.

To Shannon's right is her daughter

Kelsey Furomoto, mother of Liam.

Great-grandma Sharon Robinson is kissing little Liam's precious head.

(See page 10)



Photo above is of our annual trio of late October birthday celebrants who came by the office sometime in late November.

Katherine Hashiro (Oct. 25), Jane Tesoro and Carolyn Kamidoi (both Oct. 28) posing in appropriate socially-distanced fashion. ;-)

Mr. Pete is flouting the custom, as he isn't wearing a mask, while photobombing.

Mahalo to Jane for proof-reading this issue of *lao Pepa*!

Photo at right is of Pastor Tino at our Food Distribution Ministry day on Nov. 25th.

Photo at left is also from the same day, with volunteers from our Micronesian and Marshallese community and others, preparing the boxes of food to be delivered.

DECEMBER Birthdays

- 12/1 Alice Inouye
- 12/3 Timothy Stewart
- 12/5 Betsy Scheller
- 12/7 Jane Akitake
- 12/8 Lynn Krieg
- 12/11 Mark Mayeda
- 12/12 Karen Moody
- 12/18 Barbara Wimberley
- 12/20 Jaymina Bathin
- 12/20 Robynne Klein
- 12/21 Johnalynne Yinmed
- 12/25 Wallace Yanagi
- 12/26 Gloria Nakama

JANUARY Birthdays

- 01.01 Regina Hadley
- 01.02 Myriam Takamatsu
- 01.03 Joseph Fugow
- 01.04 Pastor's Birthday
- 01.06 Caetlyn Johannes
- 01.11 Lei Tobias
- Janice Saiki
- 01.17 Jack Belsom
- 01.19 Doris Saiki
- 01.23 H. Kalani Wong
- Samantha Hill
- 01.24 Grace Saito
- 01.27 Gurray Mathin



Tim's Mana'o | Moderator's Notes

Happy Holidays Everyone!

The Advent season is helpful in reminding us of our responsibility. This season is all about preparation. And as we journey through Advent, radio stations are playing Christmas music. This year, some stores have had Christmas decorations out immediately after Halloween. With COVID-19, it's harder to enter into the holiday season when the corporate world basically jumps the gun, but it's important to remember that that's the nature of capitalism. Consumerism only has the product, but nothing to prepare. Personally, the Christmas music starts right after Thanksgiving, the tree was decorated before December, and I'm increasing the amount of coffee, hot chocolate with marshmallows, and eggnog.

But music, food, and drink aren't what prepares us. What prepares us is the Eucharist, and what matters is how we decorate our spiritual life. As members of the Tri-Isle Association of the United Church of Christ, we do not believe that times of waiting are a call to preparation and not being complacent or passive. Because we know that when God calls us to wait it is for our own good. No time is ever wasted by God. So while I enjoy Christmas music, I know there is a lot of work to be done to prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth. It's similar to the context of waiting for His second coming. This Advent season, I need to prepare my life and I need to decorate my soul for Jesus.



The COVID-19 crisis has brought racism, political strife, and economic hardship. It should not detract or distract us from the important things in life, like marriage, parenting, and being involved in the Church. This Advent season should be a time to slow down and take the time to appreciate God's role in our lives. Our spiritual reflection does not happen on its own. We need to set aside time to pray, to study God's Word, to worship, and to do outreach. In our actions, we remain alert and ready for the coming of the Lord. We want to be ready when Jesus comes.

Mele Kalikimaka me ka hau'oli makahiki hou,

Timothy Alan Stewart 2d
Iao UCC Moderator

[Photo above: Tim being loved and celebrated on the occasion of his 45th birthday on Dec. 3, with ice cream and a candle-topped brownie, by children Alex and Anela, with spouse Sanoe taking the pic.]

Making donations or offerings to Iao UCC via **Vanco** payments:



Go to **iaoucc.org** on your browser and click on the **DONATE** button

*We've been updating the Iao UCC website recently, and one of the new things we've added is a prominent **DONATE** button on the navigation bar at the top of the page — we moved our online giving function from Square.com to Vanco Payments.*

*Also see the new pages on the website, including a historical timeline and a page gathering in one place Pastor Tino's sermons (look for it in the **Resources** tab).*

NOTE: The Vanco donation page guarantees *secure* transactions. If you would like the Iao UCC home page to also load securely—even though you're not engaging in financial transactions on it per se—you can point your web browser to:
<https://iaoucc.org> — (using 'https' instead of just 'http' or just 'iaoucc.org')

A Capital Campaign for Sanctuary Improvement | The main Sanctuary door...



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December 3, 2020

RE: Capital Campaign for front Sanctuary Door

Aloha beloved members, friends, and supporters of Iao United Church of Christ:

We know that this has been a difficult year for many and please know that we hold you and your families in our prayers. As we have maneuvered through this pandemic, we have remained vigilant in making sure that many families are being fed and that our ministry remains focused on being the church for a world and community in need.

Our Buildings and Grounds Community has also been busy in making sure that the facilities are ready to receive the church and community partners back for in-person worship and use. This has given us some time to inspect our facilities and do some upgrades to the sanctuary – such as upgrading our audio/visual capabilities for both in-person and online worship. With that said, because of safety concerns, we have found it of utmost urgency to replace our front sanctuary door. The Council has asked that we do a capital campaign request to replace the door with the hope that we can get it installed before the congregation resumes in-person worship in the sanctuary, hopefully sometime next year after the distribution of a vaccine. We have raised \$10,600 for this campaign and are requesting your assistance in raising \$20,000 in additional funds to replace the door.

We ask that, as a priority, your families are well taken care of first during this time; but if you have any extra to give for this capital campaign, your generous support is greatly appreciated. Please cut out the bottom part of this request and mail it in the self-addressed stamped envelope enclosed along with your contribution.

We thank you in advance for your continued generous support.

Blessings,

Rev. Floren "Tino" C. Cordova
Pastor

Timothy Stewart
Moderator

Name: _____

Contribution: \$ _____

Address: _____

NOTE: Please use the self-addressed stamp envelope enclosed for your convenience.

Keiro No Hi 2020

The pandemic may have curtailed many celebrations this year—including our beloved tradition of **Keiro No Hi**—but we still honor our Iao UCC *kupuna* who have reached the ages of 88 and 80 this year.

The 88-year olds are **Barbara Kusuda** and **Sadako Ige**; we are honoring Barbara posthumously, as she passed away in June of this year. The 80-year olds are **Lei Tobias**, **Anne Rowehl**, and **Rita Whitford**. As is customary, at our yearly celebrations we also honor all our living *kupuna* who are neither of those ages (see the list below). Mahalo to Lloyd Nebres for crafting the tribute to the honorees on this and the next 2 pages. Let's hope we can carry over the celebration in person next year!

Jane Tesoro and **Lee Murakami**
Keiro No Hi Co-Chairs

敬老の日



Our Revered Kupuna

98: Yaeko Furukawa & Shizue Kadoyama

96: Yukie Emoto, Jane Tanji & Misae Kameya

95: Thelma Iwami

94: Judith Kitagawa, Shirley Takitani
& Wallace Yanagi

93: Grace Saito, Ruby Sakurada, & Gladys Itamura

92: Doris Saiki, Richard Komo & Alice Inouye

91: Mike Takamatsu, Ruth Mukai
& Gloria Nakama

90: David Murata, Maybelle Hashizume,
& Lora Yaeko Sasaki

88: Barbara Kusuda* & Sadako Ige

87: Grace Murata

84: Fred Araki & Edwin Ichiriu

83: Ann Araki

82: Larry Whitford

80: Lei Tobias, Anne Rowehl & Rita Whitford

* (posthumously honored)

Barbara Fujitomo Kusuda, 88 b. February 25, 1932

This is a posthumous Keiro No Hi honor, as Barbara peacefully passed away on June 12, 2020 in Jacksonville, Florida at the age of 88.



Barbara Fujitomo Kusuda was born in Wailuku, Maui as the youngest of 4 children to Takaji and Kame Fujitomo. She attended Baldwin High School and received her Bachelor's degree in elementary education from Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio.

After graduation, she taught in the states and in Japan before returning to Maui where she taught at elementary schools in Kihei, Kahului, and Waihee. After teaching for 10 years at Waihee Elementary, she obtained her Master's degree in Library Science from the University of Hawaii and became the librarian for Waihee School until her retirement in 1995. During her time at Waihee School, she was remembered for her efficiency and how well organized she kept the library.

She married Edward Kusuda in 1962 and they had one son, Dean. She was an active member of Iao Congregational Church and served on the Board and as Treasurer. Her lifelong hobbies included baking and cooking which she would enjoy sharing with her friends and family. She was known for her home-made double pikake and orchid leis which she would make using flowers she grew in her garden. Barbara's beloved Edward passed away less than a month after she died, on July 6, 2020, at the age of 89.

Read the full obituary here: <https://cutt.ly/bhTMHLD>

Sadako Kiyan Ige, 88 | b. November 5, 1932



(The text below is adapted from a conversation with Sadako, initiated by Lynette Shiroma.)

My name is Sadako Kiyan Ige, and I was born on November 5, 1932, in Waiehu, Maui. I attended Wailuku Elementary School, then went on to Baldwin High School. I worked as a bookkeeper for more than 50 years, and at the same company—Joseph Hew, whose CPAs were Michael Nakamura and Ron Kawahara.

I grew up in a big family with 12 children (8 girls and 4 boys), and we all helped our parents by working on the family's pig farm, and we all kept close this way. Even when we had to gather buta kau-kau (slop for the pigs), life was good and we all got along with each other all our lives. My parents were open-minded, kind, and not prejudiced.



I married Kiyoshi Ige, and our wedding was held at Iao Congregational Church on November 26, 1955, officiated by The Rev. William Crisp. After Kiyoshi died, I took care of his wonderful collection of anthuriums and honohono orchids. My favorite memories are caring for my family—husband Kiyoshi, and our only child Brian. Later in life, I took care of my aging parents, and an older brother, and kept in close touch with his son, my nephew, after he passed away.

Lei Shoda Tobias, 80 | b. January 11, 1940



I'm **Lei Shoda Tobias** (formerly of Upper Pa'ia) and how did I get to be so old?

My education years, in brief—Kaunoa, 1954; then Maui High School, 1958; then Otterbein College in Westerville, Ohio, 1962. I retired as an elementary school teacher from the Flint (MI) Community Schools in 1995 at age 55. Why so young? I was eligible for full retirement so I was out of there.

Retirement years on Maui with my husband Ron were happy and care-free! Ron and I made wonderful friends in the eleven years we lived in Kahului, from 1996 to 2007.

Prior to COVID, my favorite pastime was meeting with friends for a meal, then visiting, or a movie, or shopping. I am so looking forward to being able to do that again. With COVID, I've turned to more solitary pastimes. Crocheting and knitting used to keep my hands busy during Michigan's l-o-n-n-g evenings, but now I'm somewhat limited because of arthritis in my right pinky. I also do less sewing. Now, I mostly like half-day projects like turning trash into something useable. It's called "upcycling" today. I use paper, bark, distressed wood, fabric and yarn scraps, Campbell Soup cans, you name it.

My most memorable times in my life are my college years and marrying Ron, and also the sad times of his passing, in 2008. I couldn't believe my good fortune in hooking up with him. He was a super guy, wasn't he? We raised two sons and have six grandchildren, all in Michigan.



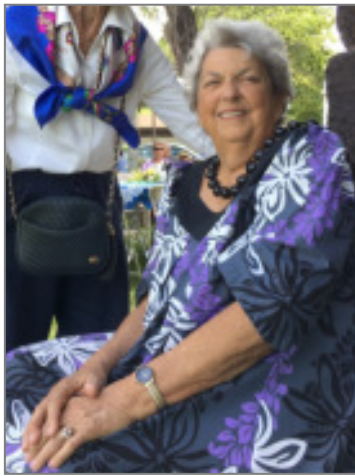
On to my life lessons: #1—Remember the good/good times. #2—Hope for the best, but be prepared for the worst. COVID really got us unprepared, didn't it? #3—Set goals and go for it with all you've got. Sometimes I border on being neurotic—work on avoiding that.

In closing, I'm 'girding up my loins' as Michigan's l-o-n-n-g winter will soon be here, and with it, isolation. Gathering outdoors will be out of the question. I'm trying to be positive. I've made a sign out of found distressed wood that reminds me: *This is another day closer to the end of COVID*. In the meantime, let's all be safe!

Happy 80th, Rita! (I feel very honored that Iao UCC is honoring me also. Thank you!)

Anne Milward Rowehl, 80 | b. February 14, 1940

I was born Feb 14, 1940 in Albany, Georgia. Roger and I met while he was a Marine on active duty in my hometown. We married six months later, on New Year's Eve 1957, in New York. He was 24; if you've done the math, you know that I was 17! It's hard to believe now, but it seemed normal at the time, even finishing high school while a married woman. We lived in



New York, on Long Island, for three years. Our first child, Wendy, was born there in 1959. John followed about 13 months later, but by then we had moved to Georgia. Roger eventually re-enlisted in the Navy and opted for Submarine School, which took us to Bainbridge, Maryland and Virginia Beach, Virginia. Alice was born in 1964, and 10 days later we packed up the Ford Galaxie 500 convertible with a 4-year-old, a 3-year-old, a newborn, and our dog Sam (a boxer), and drove to Charleston, South Carolina, for Roger's first submarine assignment, the U.S.S. Woodrow Wilson. We followed that sub to Newport News in 1968, for repairs, and a year later to Hawai'i. Roger remembers that as soon as we stepped off the plane in Honolulu, I declared that I was "home."

Our first tour in Hawai'i lasted only two years. We lived in Navy housing in Pearl City, but we explored every corner of the island (Hanauma Bay and Waimanalo Beach Park were favorite haunts). In 1970, we welcomed our fourth child into the family, Paul, a Native American of the Sioux tribe, who was born on the Standing Rock reservation in North Dakota and just 4 months old when I flew to pick him up. Roger was at sea at the time, so he learned of our new family member via a "Babygram," one of the 3 brief communications we were allowed when the sub was deployed.

In 1971, the Navy moved our family of six back to the East Coast, only to return us to Hawai'i two short years later. This time we bought a house in Ewa Beach, and I started taking classes at Leeward Community College. A year later, with both Wendy and John attending private schools in Honolulu, we moved closer in, to Navy housing near Pearl Harbor. I was accepted into the Nursing School at UH Mānoa and started commuting to school with my kids.

(Continued, on page 11)

Rita Huebschman Whitford, 80 | b. June 10, 1940



(The text below is adapted from a conversation Lee Murakami had with Rita; transcribed and written by Lee.)

Our very own witty master of ceremonies for *Keiro No Hi* and leader of the Lunch Bunch has reached the glorious age of 80. We celebrate Rita Whitford for her coming of age and honor her commitment to serving our Iao UCC community.

Rita was born Rita Huebschman on June 10, 1940 in St. Louis, Missouri. She was educated in St. Louis and did extremely well in her business classes. Two weeks after graduating she was hired as a civilian clerk typist working for the U.S. Army and later as a contract administrator. In 1964 Rita scheduled her first trip to the islands. Upon seeing the beauty of this new state, she decided this would be her permanent residence. She found employment as a sales clerk for Liberty House in Honolulu and also as an agricultural surveyor.

In 1966 she became a secretary to the Manager of Automotive Services. It was there she met Larry Whitford, who was the warehouse operation manager for the business. Sparks flew between these two who were attracted to each other, and wedding bells resounded on December 24, 1966.

In 1968 Larry, a Maui boy, longed to return to the island of his birth. They decided Maui No Ka Oi would be the best place to raise their family. Rita and Larry have two children, Luana and Kalani, and two grandchildren, Danann and Cullen. You can see stars in Rita's eyes when she speaks of her family.

Larry supported his family as a policeman. Rita added to the family income as a docent for Hale Ho'ike'ike. In 1974 Rita began her career with the U.S. Postal Service as a rural mail carrier and union steward representing other rural carriers in the National Rural Letter Carriers Association.

(Continued, on page 11)

“Diversity Before the Throne”

Sermon on November 1, 2020 by The Rev. Floren“Tino” C. Cordova, Pastor

22nd Sunday After Pentecost – Revelation 7:9-17 & Matthew 5:1-12

Quote: “The Vote” by John Lewis

“The vote is precious. It is the most powerful non-violent tool we have in a democratic society, and we must use it.”

This week I was thinking about some of your stories lao Church. How some of you look at others in what they do through their actions and see them as “saint-like” people of God and how each of you are inspired by what these saints do. I was also remembering many of the saint-like actions of many people that I have come to admire in my last 3.5 years as your Pastor. Doing things not for the sake of earning a path to heaven – since we cannot earn our way into heaven, but by the grace of God – but doing things because it is in each of your nature as people of God and as family members of this beloved church we call lao UCC. Thank you saints – thank each of you for all you have done and continue to do as you bring forth from within, the DNA of who lao UCC is in our community. Saints are not saints because they were or are perfect – but how they allow God to work through their imperfections to bless those around them. We know these beloved saints in our families, friends, community and church. Beloved lao Church, beloved brothers and sisters in our virtual world – if we silence all the noise around us and see the time, talents and treasures brought to bear by everyone around us, we might literally see and experience the diverse throne of God before us. People who are blessing other people by living and doing the Gospel in their daily lives. Are we perfect – no! Do we know what God has in store for us – probably not! Do we fall on our face at times when trying something new – most likely! But do we get ourselves up, help others get themselves up – dust ourselves off – yes! And most importantly, we do not walk alone – we walk along side each other offering a helping hand and a shoulder to lean on – because that too is in our lao UCC DNA.



As your Pastor, I see it often, and I praise God for each of you, our friends and supporters of lao Church. This really speaks to our first reading beloveds – “...and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands.” You see beloved community – as Easter People we are still welcoming God into our lives, even from our House Churches and as deployed people of God. We are still welcoming and living out the Christ in us to a world in need, especially at a time such as this and this coming week. We must still be in “parade” mode with palm branches at the ready to welcome those who would join us in our virtual world today, just as much as we have always been ready to receive new visitors in our Sanctuary. You may not see the multitude join us on Sunday when we are on, but they do join us at a later time as they view our Virtual Worship Services at different times and different parts of the world. Let us throw a parade for those who are seeking a place to belong, a church that loves them, a church that will bless them as much as we are ready to be blessed by them. lao Church knows all about diversity – Amen! We know what a great and diverse multitude looks like at the throne of God because that too is in our DNA as a church – where ALL are welcomed, even from our deployed House Churches.

So, who is this multitude beloved church – beloved brothers and sisters in our virtual world? How does this multitude of God’s people look like? There is a diverse group of people who are poor in spirit. Maybe they have been spiritually beaten down because of COVID19 – lost a loved one, suffered from the virus. Maybe there is family turmoil because of illness, or maybe political disagreements. Maybe some are still unemployed and worried about where the next meal is coming from for their family. Their spirit is in need great of a good dose of hope. The hope they can rely on is that they, along with many – are inheritors of a great estate known as heaven. The kingdom of heaven awaits them.

There is a diverse group of people who are in need of comfort. Loss of job, loss of a loved one, locked up in cages like animals – these are God’s children that mourn for things to get better, mourn for a better life other than a war-torn country or locked cages. Mourn to have their children returned to them. Or mourn that their children will have a better life in a country that once believed on this premise, from Emma Lazarus’ poem “The New Colossus,” engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty:

*“Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.”*

Beloveds, this is what diversity looks like before the throne of God. Can we be God’s Holy Throne to a world in need church? Then we have the diverse, quiet, gentle souls amongst us. Many of these beloveds are peaceful, yet stern in their resolve for a just society. God’s children that believe in taking care of our earthly home. We have those who believe in doing what is right and good and just. This diverse group believes in morality and decency in how we treat one another. Christ tells us they will be filled. They will be filled with justices.



When we as a diverse community are filled with mercy, when we seek peace within ourselves and our community – as God’s children, we act justly and mercifully. When we as a church and diverse community do this and more – people not only see God at work in and through us. They experience God in their own lives because of the blessings that emerge from the very heart of the church – the very heart of God. Even if we are persecuted for being a diverse people of God that welcomes ALL people without excuse and without apology – we are blessed beloveds – we are blessed! Amen and praise God! We must be ready to tell our own story and not allow others to define who we are as God’s people. Rejoice Lao Church – rejoice people of God – for we are in great company of saints who are amongst us.

The people who Jesus considered as blessed were the outsiders – the tax collectors, the prostitutes, the “othered” of society. Those who persecuted the prophets – persecuted the saints in Jesus’ time may seem as if they are still with us today. How then Church are we blessed? Look at the blessings and gifts that everyone brings with them. Thank goodness we are not robots where we all look the same, act the same, have the same gifts, think the same. Thank goodness for our diversity – that is the biggest blessing that is described in our first reading. If we are to truly live out our mission statement – we must heed the words familiar to many of us. “Make me a blessing to someone today. Out of my life may Jesus shine.”

Let us close with this beloved Lao church and brothers and sisters in our virtual world. I see how much each of you are a blessing toward one another. The better angels in each of us bring forth hope to a desperate world and country in need. As we go forth this week to do our sacred duty as citizens of this country – let our lives reflect our diversity and strength. Let us be God’s Holy Throne on earth. Let us be blessed to be peacemakers, merciful, mourn for the loss of loved ones, be gentle people, yet resolved for justice and do what is right. Let us be people of “pono.” Let us be pure in our hearts and when we do all this my beloved saints – We shall see the face of God!

Amen, Amene, Ashe, A-ho, and Alleluia.

Welcome, babies! | The newest family members in our church 'ohana...



His name is

Liam James Nobuyuki Beach

born on November 6th, 2020

(at 6 lbs, 15 oz. 21 in.)

to Kelsey Furomoto & Lyle Beach.

Grandson of

Shannon & Jaime Ribao,

who wrote on Facebook:

*"The most precious gift
and blessing of 2020."*

"Along came this little miracle, and no
day was ever ordinary again."*

(*Ed.: When Kelsey was pregnant with
Liam, she tested positive for
COVID-19. She and baby Liam
are healthy and well, praise God!)



His name is

Cooper Alan Smith

born on July 6th, 2020

to Brian & Lisa Smith of
Rancho Mission Viejo, CA.

Brian is the son of
Richard Smith, who is
the son of

Myriam Takamatsu,

who is a great-grandmother
for the first time.

Said she:

*"We have not been able to
hold him, we get to see him
online only on FaceTime."*



Her name is

Hartley Sakiko Tesoro

Born on November 19th, 2020

shortly after midnight.

She is the youngest child of
Jon and Traci Tesoro,
and granddaughter of
Jane Oshiro Tesoro,

who writes:

*"Hartley joins her 10-year-old
brother Treyden and 7-year-old
sister Dempsey with yet another
unique name. Born in the time
of Covid, she has a determined
look that declares:
Nevertheless, she persisted!"*

Manao of a Kupuna | David Murata, 91 y.o.

The Diversity of the UCC

I mentioned a reason for my being a life long member of the UCC was its practice and promotion of diversity in a congregation. It was a reason that I was an active member of most churches in which I was a member. Even if my ethnicity, academic background, social/economic status, calling to ministry was different from fellow members, and Pastor, I was accepted at UCC churches practicing diversity. Not all churches/ denominations promote or accept diversity. Some require its opposite, "conformity" of its members.

Diversity of membership will not only allow people of any of God's created person into His kingdom but can create new ministries the churches are called to perform. Different as we may be from each other, we must remember that we are part of one body, and we need to focus our lives to live by His ways.

Anne Rowehl, continued:

After graduating with an R.N. degree, I worked in Obstetrics at a number of hospitals, eventually taking the position of Head Nurse in Maternity at Queen's Hospital. And we moved to Kailua, where we all loved living one house back from one of O'ahu's most beautiful beaches.

Roger retired from the Navy in 1980, after 23 years' service. He'd earned an MBA while serving, and after a short stint with the Civil Service he began working in the private sector.

In 1984, with very mixed feelings about leaving my "home", we moved to Santa Maria, California. I found work that I loved, as the Director of a brand new freestanding Birth Center. Roger worked for Martin Marietta, a Defense contractor. And Alice and Paul finished high school, and both went on to attend college in-state.

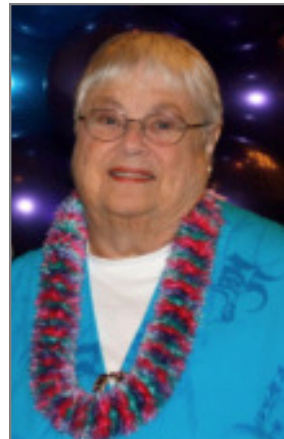
Alice and her husband (at the time) Paul returned to Hawai'i after college, trying Hawai'i Island first before deciding to settle on Maui. Roger and I followed a couple of years later and moved into an 'ohana behind her house that Roger and Paul built. I began working as a nurse for Hospice Maui, and was surprised to learn that I loved end-of-life care as much as I'd loved beginning-of-life-care. Roger was mostly retired by then, but kept himself very busy as chief daycare provider for Alice's children Matthew and Jessica, as a Hospice volunteer, and in various lay positions at Keawala'i Church.

It took three tries, but I finally retired from Hospice for good about five years ago, and now serve on its board of directors. After 20 years in Kihei, Roger and I moved into a lovely Wailuku home with our son John, just about 5 minutes from 'Iao UCC. This New Year's Eve will be our 63rd anniversary. Our children, all of them kind and smart, are leading productive lives, and now our grandchildren are following suit. Even in the middle of a pandemic, we are happy and healthy (for octogenarians), and grateful for our many blessings.

Rita Whitford, continued:

During those years there were only a few women in this occupation. To qualify, you had to be capable of lifting 70-lb. packages. Not many women had the strength to meet that requirement. Rita was the first female hired by the Wailuku Post Office. After 29 years of dedicated service, Rita would retire in 2003 with a Federal Pension plan to protect her senior years.

Although being a leader, having the ability to converse with anyone, and possessing various talents and work skills, Rita's life was not all smooth sailing. In 1986 she had breast surgery. In 1992 she had colon surgery, and in 2019 she was treated for melanoma. She survived three bouts with cancer. What a resilient woman!



In life we experience sunny days and rainy days, sometimes a hurricane. Rita has enjoyed some sunshine moments on the theater stage. While in Honolulu, she acted and sang musicals at the University of Hawaii. She even performed with Bette Midler in the show, "Of Thee I Sing." From 1974 she contributed to the success of the Maui Community Theater, the Maui Youth Theater, and performances at the Baldwin High School auditorium working with Sue Loudon. In theater musicals she participated as an actress or was involved in the production by creating an escape for audiences to enjoy. Her last involvement in a show was in 2000. Her children grew up in theater while Rita indulged in her hobby. To this day, her children's interests also lie in theater productions. Now, Rita helps Luana with the organizing and cataloging of materials from past performances.

Rita is proud of the bond and the life she developed with Larry. On December 24, 2020, she and Larry will celebrate their 54th year of marriage. Not many couples can reach that Golden 50th year anniversary to which Rita and Larry have now surpassed.

Her life lesson to share is: "Never be afraid to strike up a conversation with people around you, even if you don't know them. You will meet some interesting people and find you have a lot in common. You may learn things you would not have discovered and maybe you will have made a friend."

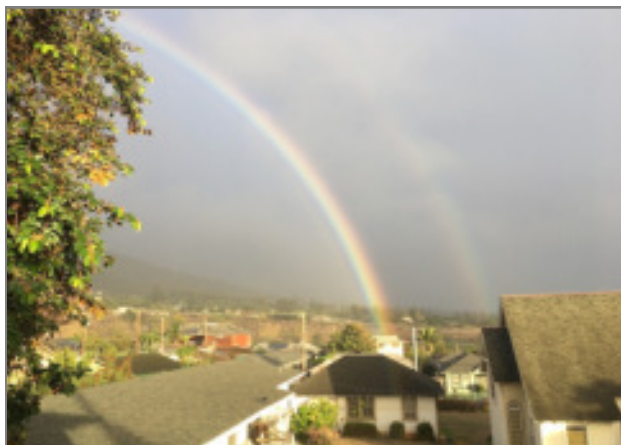


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NOTE:

If you would like to read this newsletter in bigger print, please contact Lloyd at the church office, and we will gladly send you a copy in larger format.

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*Early morning rainbow above Waiehu...
 ...sometime in the middle of November.*

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You are always welcome at Iao UCC.