



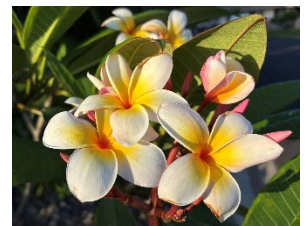
*A Monthly Newsletter of 'Īao United Church of Christ*

2371 W. Vineyard Street, Wailuku | (808) 244-7353 | Email: [office@iaoucc.org](mailto:office@iaoucc.org)

May 2026

### Kahu Kalani's Konnections

We've all heard the phrase "April showers bring May flowers". Did you know that this proverb came from a poem written in the 1610's in the United Kingdom? Even if we don't have a green thumb, we equate spring as a time when life springs forth. After the Kona low storms and all the other showers we had coming down on us, we have seen the abundance of vegetation springing forth. It's amazing how little rain it takes to get the weeds to run rampant.



And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose; Romans 8:28

Like many proverbs, this saying carries a deeper meaning—good things often follow periods of hardship. When life's storms overwhelm us, it can be difficult to see hope. Yet, with patience and faith, good things will emerge. Consider Joseph: sold into slavery by his brothers, serving in Pharaoh's household, falsely accused, and imprisoned. While in prison, he interpreted dreams for the cupbearer, baker, and Pharaoh. Eventually, Joseph's hardships ended; Pharaoh made him governor of Egypt, preparing for famine and saving both Egypt and Israel. Joseph's rainy season was followed by blooming flowers.

Romans 8:28 tells us, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." It's difficult to see that "all things" includes the storms of life, but God is faithful and will always be there with us. He will work things out for good, turning our trials into triumphs. So, never fear the rain for good things will be sure to follow.

Mahalo to all who will be filling in for me while I am away during the month of May. This includes our guest preachers- May 3- Rev. Kyle Lovett, May 10- Keola Whittaker, May 17 and 24- Kahu Dennis Barger, and June 7- Rev. Scott Landis.

Be sure to be in service on May 31 as we celebrate **Graduate Sunday** when we honor our high school seniors- Shanielle Alik Tilfas, Jaydee Hadley, Noah Johannes, Dorothy Nena, Carlyn Obet, Darcy Petrus, Darcean Phillip, and Pat Johnson Phillip. The youth will be our greeters and readers, and the message will be given by our young adults.



Serving you in Christ,  
Kahu Kalani

# WORSHIP

## May 3: Fifth Sunday of Easter (communion)

Title: "A Balm in...Hawai'i?"  
 Preacher: Rev. Kyle Lovett  
 Scripture: Jeremiah 29:4-7  
 Greeter: Suzette Robinson  
 Readers: Noah and Danny Johannes  
 Musician: Maki Rickard  
 Aloha Hour: Lynette Shiroma and the Johannes Family

## May 10: Sixth Sunday of Easter- Mother's Day

Title: *Love That Will Not Let You Go*  
 Preacher: Keola Whittaker  
 Scripture: John 14:15-21  
 Greeter: Suzette Robinson  
 Readers: Noah and Danny Johannes  
 Musician: Christophe Javon  
 Aloha Hour: Men of 'Āo

## May 17: Seventh Sunday of Easter

Title: *Jesus Promised Spiritual Unity*  
 Preacher: Kahu Dennis Barger  
 Scripture: John 17:1-11, Acts 1:3-5  
 Greeter: Suzette Robinson  
 Readers: Noah and Danny Johannes  
 Musician: Dale Schwarz and Ann Barclay-Rovner  
 Aloha Hour: Joy Yamaoka and Dawna Krueger

## May 24: Pentecost

Title: *Incendiary Christians*  
 Preacher: Kahu Dennis Barger  
 Scripture: John 20:19-22, portions of Acts 2  
 Greeter: Suzette Robinson  
 Readers: Noah and Danny Johannes  
 Musician: Christophe Javon  
 Aloha Hour: Open

## May 31: Youth and Graduate Sunday

Title: *And It Was Good*  
 Speakers: Caetlyn Johannes, Siena DeLima, and graduating seniors.  
 Scripture: Genesis 1:1-2:4  
 Greeter: Youth  
 Readers: Youth  
 Musician: Christophe Javon  
 Aloha Hour: Kosrae Etawi

## Buildings and Grounds

Due to the Kona Low Storms, the March workday was rescheduled to April 4. The monthly cleaning was really needed as the storms had caused the grass, weeds, and bushes to grow. Mahalo to those who came to make our church look beautiful for Easter.



Above: Cheryl Matsui, Mike Petersen, and Dennis Hashiro take a break after trimming the hedge along Vineyard Street. The cuttings filled the back of Mike's truck.  
 Below: John Yoruw prepares the church lanai for application of an epoxy finish.



'A 'ohe hana nui ke alu 'ia  
 no task is too big when  
 done together by all.

Thank you to everyone who also came out to the April 26, 2026, 4th Saturday Workday. The sanctuary pews and cushions were cleaned by the Kosraean women. A never-ending job! We were able to dig the trench for the French drain by our lanai and hopefully it will help alleviate the flooding next to the sanctuary area to prevent the water from going under the building. During the recent storm water came through our front door. We also worked on getting the sanctuary door more weather tight. Have you noticed that we have less weeds? We worked on that too. Mahalo, arigato, kulo, thank you. See you all on May 23 for our next workday.



## ‘Īao Preschool

Look how busy month April has been! April 6 was Easter Monday at ‘Īao Preschool: The children started the day by making bunny ears. After circle time, we went on an Easter egg hunt, and in the afternoon, we colored eggs.

Tuesday, April 14: Our preschool and families went on a walking excursion to the County Building for the second annual Month of the Young Child celebration, “Nurturing Keiki, Strengthening ‘Ohana.” There were bubbles, entertainment, prize and game booths, and open-ended activities like playdough.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) celebrates the Week of the Young Child with daily activities that support children’s learning and growth in developmentally appropriate ways.

- **Music Monday:** Sue (Emry’s mom) and friends visited to share live music with guitar and harmonica.
- **Tasty Tuesday:** We made smoothies! The children chose their fruits and milk, added everything to the blender, helped blend, and enjoyed their smoothies at snack time.
- **Work Together Wednesday:** Parachute play, puzzles, and storytelling together. (No photos—we were busy working together!)
- **Artsy Thursday:** Bubble art, galaxy art with chalk and hammers, scratch art using cards and combs, and more.

**Looking ahead to May:** We hope to visit the Bailey House Museum on May Day (May 1) and celebrate our mothers with our **Mother’s Day Luncheon** on May 8.



## Justice and Witnessing

On March 28, members of the Justice & Witnessing Community and members of the Iao UCC Congregation attended the 3rd No Kings Protest and March. Many thanks to Cheryl Matsui and Gerald Montano, who helped guide attendees through the march.

On April 4th, our own Sam Takara helped wash cars for Maui Pride as a fundraiser for the Annual Pride event. Mahalo to Sam for braving the hot sun to keep those cars clean!



*(continued on page 4)*

(continued from page 3)

Members of the Justice & Witnessing Community submitted testimony in opposition to Supercomputing Site Small Telescope Advanced Research (AMOS STAR) facility being built on the peak of Haleakala. Such a project not only is detrimental to the environment but violates a space sacred to Native Hawaiians.

And finally, after many phone calls, emails, and testimonies, HB1875—the Gender-Affirming Care Shield Law—has passed both chambers of the Hawai'i legislature and is headed to the Governor's desk for signing. We hope he signs it without incident. Mahalo plenty for all the hard work in getting this through!"

## Learning Community

Our Sunday School keiki made salt and watercolor crosses. When they asked if they could decorate the inside of the cross, a great discussion followed as to why the cross should be empty. They can be seen in the sanctuary wall. (Just a note, all the humidity didn't help the pictures)



Gergley.Phillip?Javion.  
Yoruw?and.AJ.Tozer.recite.  
the.books.of.the.Bible.on.  
Easter.Sunday.in.front.of.the.  
judges;

Wasn't the Books of the Bible challenge just fantastic! The unanimous winners were the keiki as determined by an impartial set of judges. Our next memorization will be what part does Jesus play in each book! Ex: Genesis: He is the Breath of Life, Exodus: the Passover Lamb.

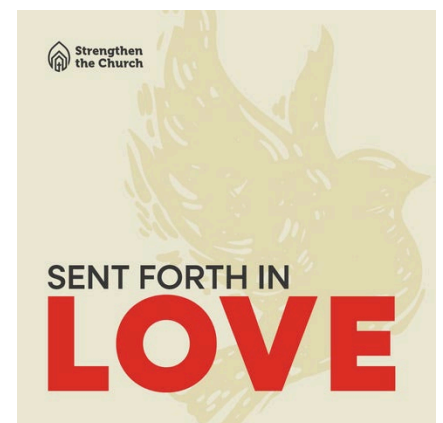
Following the Easter service, the keiki had a great time gathering eggs and all their prizes. Mahalo to those who provided all the prizes and to the young adults who set up the egg hunt.

Aunties Coreen, Youlida, Shrue, Linda and Caitlyn keep the kids engaged and enthusiastic with their weekly classes. Please let us know if you would like to help with this vital ministry.

## Stewarding Community

A Special Offering in May is **Strengthen the Church**. The theme for 2026 is *Sent Forth in Love*. Envelopes will be available for your contribution and collected on Pentecost Sunday, May 24.

How can we follow the Spirit to bless emerging ministries in the United Church of Christ? Through the **Strengthen the Church Offering** you support the formation of new congregations and the renewal of existing ones, fund new programs for youth and young adults, and sponsor leadership development for the whole church. Thank you for your gifts!



Our Stewarding Community approved funds to provide gift prizes at the May 30<sup>th</sup> Voices of Micronesia event at the Queen Ka'ahumanu Center. 'Īao UCC will have a table there to show our support of the Micronesian community.

## Worshipping Community

Happy month of May! This month's Worship article will highlight the various events happening on Sundays. Kahu Kalani will be away on a pre-planned trip from May 2 – 29. During this period, we have prepared every Sunday with special guest preachers.

- May 3: Rev. Kyle Lovett will be our guest preacher. She is the Pasifika Liaison to the Conference Minister of Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ.
- May 10: Mother's Day - Keola Whittaker will deliver the sermon.
- May 17: Kahu Dennis Barger will be preaching.
- May 24- Pentecost: Kahu Dennis Barger will once again be preaching. Remember to wear RED!
- May 31- Youth and Graduates' Sunday – We are excited to welcome back Kahu Kalani! Our guest speakers are Caetlyn Johannes, Siena DeLima, and the seniors. Congratulations to our graduating seniors: Shanielle Alik Tilfas, Jaydee Hadley, Noah Johannes, Dorothy Nena, Carlyn Obet, Darcy Petrus, Darcean Phillip, and Pat Johnson Phillip.



Levi.and.Lyle.Rickard.  
helped.mom?Maki?lead.us.  
in.the.singing.of.»Faithful?  
Faithful.is.Our.God«.on.  
April.7<sup>th</sup>;

Now, as we enter the month of May, let us continue to support one another and share God's love with our neighbors. We look forward to seeing you at church and in the community! Have a blessed month!

## Food Pantry

Have you heard the phrase, "I'm so hungry, I could eat an elephant"? Okay, I know it should be a horse but guess what? Our food pantry clients did that in April. We gave out 16,000 pounds or 8 tons of food, which is a little under what a male African bush elephant weighs.



The number of families we serve each week continues to grow but often the shelves at the Maui Food Bank are bare. If anyone wishes to contribute to our Food Pantry it can be done by adding a check earmarked for the Food Pantry.

Volunteers are always welcome to help unload the pallets of food (starting at 9:30am), pack about 150 bags with the fresh fruits and vegetables (starting at 10am), make the food boxes (starting at 10:30), distribute food boxes, or patrol the parking lot (from 10:00am-1:30pm) to help keep our Preschoolers safe!

The Food Pantry is open on Mondays, 11:00am till 2:00 pm. If Monday is a holiday, the Food Pantry will be on Wednesday.



## All in the Family



**Hot cross buns!**  
**Hot cross buns!**  
**One a penny, two a penny.**  
**Hot cross buns!**

There are many, many stories about the Hot Cross Buns we shared Easter Sunday at our Aloha Hour. They are usually eaten on Good Friday to mark the end of Lent. (so, we were just a week late) The following may spike your interest to look further.

A hot cross bun is a spiced bun, usually containing small pieces of raisins and marked with a cross on the top, traditionally eaten on Good Friday. They are available all year round in some countries.

The bun marks the end of the season of Lent. Further, the different elements of the hot cross bun each have a specific meaning, such as the cross representing the crucifixion of Jesus and the spices inside signifying the spices used to embalm him.

Our love and Mahalo go to Jennifer Saito and Sanoë Awai baking our Hot Cross Buns.  
~Submitted by Dawna Krueger

## Welcome Kaia Furumoto!

Proud Nana & Mama Shannon & Jaime Ribao celebrated the arrival of granddaughter Kaia Lyn Furumoto, who made her appearance on Thursday, April 23, 2026. Congratulations to proud mommy & daddy, Ashlyn Leishman & Cody Furomoto.



## Just Driving By



**Taylor Lane Daymude** visited Maui recently and drove past our church. He noticed our sign and wanted to know more about who we are and what we stand for. Taylor is the **Associate Counsel serving in US Senator Mazie Hirono's** office in Washington, D.C. His portfolio includes protecting the rights of LGBTQI individuals, and the Micronesian community. Kahu Kalani shared our mission statement regarding being an Open and Affirming church to which Mr. Daymude was impressed and felt that was what a church should be like.

*'Āo Congregational Church/'Āo UCC is a multi-racial and multicultural church that is open and affirming to all people regardless of race, color, nationality, age, political alliances, different abilities and sexual orientations. We will embody that commitment in our worship, in our policies and in our ministry.*

*There is room for disagreement. We now project an image of a congregation that cares for its members and its staff, that will make and keep commitments to the larger church, that is not afraid of interfaith cooperation and dialogue and that is liberal in welcoming all people into this community of faith because of the love we know in Jesus Christ. (from our Missional Strategy, adopted May 5, 2002)*

## Mahalo, Kulo, Arigato, Thank You

We served as homebase for the Juneau-Douglas High School Homebuilders who came to help Habitat for Humanity Maui rebuild homes after the devastating wildfires in August, 2023. This is their note of thanks.

*Dear Supporter of The JDHS Homebuilders:*

*We recently returned from our Habitat for Humanity build trip, and it's our privilege to thank you for your kind support and summarize what we did during our week in Maui.*

*Monday through Thursday found us in Lahaina, where we helped rebuild two homes that burned in the wildfires of 2023. It was bittersweet to be a part of this because Juneau students helped build the original homes in 2018 and 2019. It was rewarding to work alongside one of the homeowners all week- Her house is at the drywall stage, and one team of students helped hang drywall with her. The other group of students helped install Hardie Plank siding on the second house. It was fun to work with Hardie Plank because we installed cedar siding on the house in Juneau, and it was valuable to experience the different siding materials.*

*Aside from working on these houses, the highlight of the trip was going on a snorkel/whale watch trip that SEA MAUI generously donated to our group. Our collective minds were blown as we swam next to turtles, colorful fish, and coral. We also saw numerous baby Humpback Whales breaching and doing what baby whales do before they migrate to Juneau waters. The positive impact of this experience on our kids cannot be overstated.*

*The trip went smoothly, and we are back to Juneau, where we have 1 quarter of school left. We are looking forward to completing one house and starting to frame another. This trip and our House Build program would not be possible without the years of support you've provided, and as such, we extend a sincere thank you!*

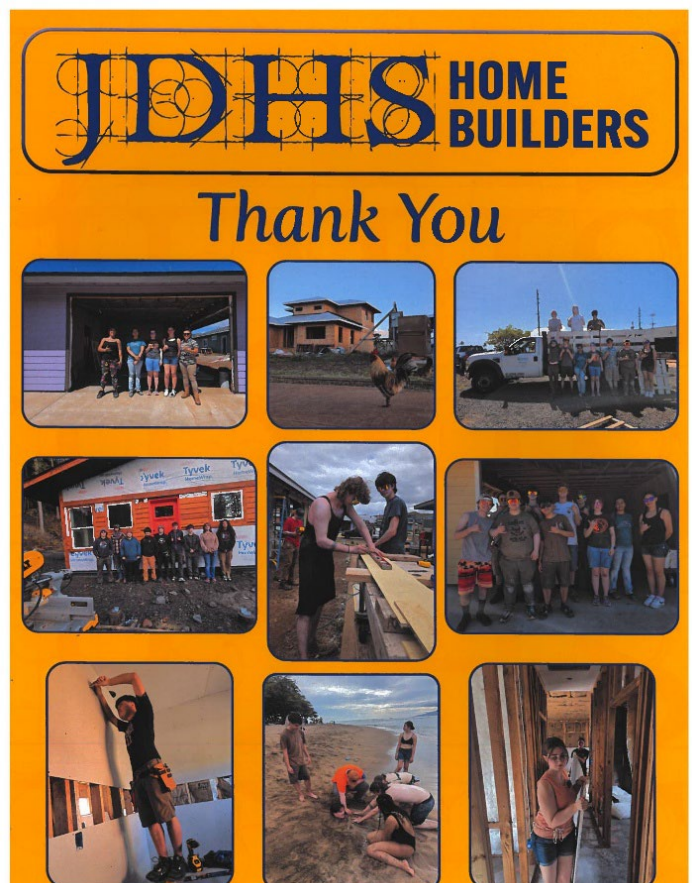
*Sincerely,*



**Andy Bullick and the JDHS Homebuilders.**

*"Lifetime achievement is not what we achieve in our lifetimes, but what we inspire others to achieve in theirs."*

**- AMANDA GORMAN**



# Notes to the 'Ohana

## Citrus City Brass Band

Mark your calendar for the return visit of the Citrus City Brass Band from California. They will be holding a concert on Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> in our sanctuary, 1:00 p.m.- 2:00 p.m. (doors open at 12:30 p.m. The artistic director and resident trumpet, Kenley Nakao, a graduate of Baldwin High School, is the grandson of Maybelle Hashizume. While on Maui, they will be visiting a number of schools, sharing their love of music with helpful insights, and songs the children can relate to. They invited the preschoolers to a rehearsal where the children instantly recognized the theme from “Bluey” and “Toy Story”. There was another one they played that I couldn’t figure out but one little girl did. LOL!




## Navigating the Islands: Culture, Health, and Community

The Voices of Micronesians of Maui event, which was originally scheduled for March 21, has been rescheduled to May 30. ‘Āao UCC will be hosting a table at this event in support of our Micronesians neighbors. We need volunteers to help staff our table. Please contact Dawna Krueger if you would like to kōkua.

E.kala.mai?gomen.nasai • .Our.apologies.in.advance;our.next.newsletter.will.be.published.a.little.later.in.June.due.to.the.editor"s.travel.schedule;

<p><b>COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:</b></p>	<p><b>FREE EVENT FOR EVERYONE!</b></p> <p>Kids Area</p> <p>Wellness Stations</p> <p>Giveaways and Prizes</p> <p>Entertainment – Cultural Showcase, Demos, &amp; more!</p>	<p><b>SERVICES AND RESOURCES:</b></p> <p>Enrollment for health insurance</p> <p>FREE health screenings</p> <p>Support for job opportunities</p> <p>FREE resources for the household</p> <p>Immigrant services</p> <p>'Know your Rights' education</p>
<p>Questions? Contact Youlida at (808) 298-1441 or Della at (808) 264-1213</p>		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><b>Happy Birthday this month to:</b>                      5-Maybelle Hashizume, 8-JayDee Hadley, Paul Tonnesen,                      9-Anna Mayeda, 10-Joy Yamaoka, 13-Gepe Palik,                      17-Gerald Montano, 18-Mayleen Phillip, 18-Lorraine Edmond,                      27-Emma Mike, 28-Bryn Turner, 30-Heide Israel, Noah Johannes</p>					1	2
					9-12 Citrus City Brass rehearsal <b>S</b> 11:30a Ladies Lunch Bunch <b>L</b> 6p-7p Kosraen Women's Fellowship <b>S</b>	7-8p AA Speaker <b>K</b>
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<b>10 am Worship</b> Communion 11:30 Learning <b>E</b> 11:30 Pastoral Search Comm <b>K</b> 1-2p Citrus City Brass Concert <b>S</b> 3p-6p Kosrae Etawi <b>SK</b>	9a-2p Food Pantry <b>K</b> 6:30-9:30 AA <b>K</b>	5:50-7:30 AI Anon District <b>K</b>	5-6:30 Etawi <b>K</b> 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui <b>S</b>	9:30 IPS Chapel <b>S</b>	6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship <b>S</b>	2:30-6:30 Hana Hou Music Program <b>S</b> 7-8p AA Speaker <b>K</b>
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<b>10 am Worship</b> 6 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter <b>Mother's Day</b> 3p-6p Kosrae Etawi <b>SK</b>	9a-2p Food Pantry <b>K</b> 5:45 Learning <b>Z</b> 6:30-9:30 AA <b>K</b>	12:45p Visitation	7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui <b>S</b>	9:30 IPS Chapel <b>S</b>	6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship <b>S</b>	9-10 B&G Meeting <b>E</b> 7-8p AA Speaker <b>K</b>
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<b>10 am Worship</b> 7 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter 11:15a Stewarding <b>E</b> 3p-6p Kosrae Etawi <b>SK</b>	9a-2p Food Pantry <b>K</b> 6:30-9:30 AA <b>K</b>	12:45p Visitation	'Iao Pepa/Council Reports Due 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui <b>S</b>	9:30 IPS Chapel <b>S</b>	6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship <b>S</b>	8a Workday 7-8p AA Speaker <b>K</b>
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<b>10 am Worship Pentecost</b> Strengthen the Church Offering 3p-6p Kosrae Etawi <b>SK</b>	 OFFICE CLOSED <b>NO Food Pantry</b> 6:30-9:30 AA <b>K</b>	5:45 Council <b>Z</b> 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui <b>S</b>	9a-2p Food Pantry <b>K</b> 5:45 Council <b>Z</b> 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui <b>S</b>	9:30 IPS Chapel <b>S</b>	6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship <b>S</b>	7-8p AA Speaker <b>K</b>
31						Location Key: S- Sanctuary K- Kanda Hall E- Endo Hall L- Lanai Z- Zoom
<b>10 am Worship</b> Youth and Graduate Sunday 3p-6p Kosrae Etawi <b>SK</b>						



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*"Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other." – 1 John 4:11*

**'Āao United Church of Christ**  
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Office/Food Pantry (808) 244-7353  
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**or by appointment**  
**Food Pantry Monday 11a-2p**

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[facebook.com/groups/iaoucc/](https://facebook.com/groups/iaoucc/)

**IN PERSON/VIRTUAL SUNDAY WORSHIP 10:00 A.M.**

Bridge Pastor	Kahu Kalani Wong
Co-Moderators	Shannon Ribao and Suzette Robinson
Office Volunteers	Various Faithful Individuals
Pianist	Various Gifted Individuals
Newsletter	Kalani Wong, editor
'Āao Preschool Director	Flerida Iniba

*You are always welcome at 'Āao UCC.*

**We are a people of God living and sharing the love of Christ through words and actions**