



A Monthly Newsletter of 'Īao United Church of Christ

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

May 2026

Kahu Kalani's Konnections

Standing in the shadows gazing up at the impressive edifice, one cannot help but marvel at the grandeur of Notre-Dame de Paris. This Catholic Cathedral is considered one of the finest examples of French Gothic architecture. It started construction in 1163 and was largely completed by 1260, though modifications were made over the years. It was the site of the coronation of Napoleon as Emperor of France and the funerals of many former French presidents.



Tragically, a fire ravaged the building in 2019, consuming the spire and much of the wooden roof structure. Fortunately, the vaulted stone ceiling largely contained the flames, protecting the interior. French President Emmanuel Macron pledged to rebuild Notre-Dame within five years. Close to 1,000 artisans from around the world came together to help with the massive undertaking, either on site or in workshops across France. It finally reopened in December 2024.

This fire underscores the vulnerability of this and other historic cathedrals, as many are made of wood or with wooden infrastructure. This fragility is much like our own church, not so much of the physical structure but of the body of believers who gather in the name of Christ. While we strive to be faithful people, we are also humans. As humans, we struggle to live in harmony as God has called us to. Note just a few of the scriptures that admonish us to seek unity with one another.

- Romans 12:16: "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited."
- Psalm 133:1: "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"
- 1 Peter 3:8: "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble."
- Ephesians 4:3: "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

No one knows the real cause of the Notre-Dame fire, but it could have been something as small as a burning cigarette that almost totally demolished a grand place of worship. Likewise, something as

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WORSHIP

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June 7: Second Sunday of Pentecost (communion)

Title: *"Building Altars"*

Preacher: Rev. Scott Landis

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-9

Greeter: Dawna Krueger

Readers: Alex Awai-Stewart and Joy
Yamaoka

Musician: Ruth Murata

Aloha Hour: Dale Schwarz and Anna
Mayeda

June 15: Third Sunday of Pentecost

Title: *You've Got to be Kidding Me*

Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong

Scripture: Genesis 18:1-15

Greeter: Dawna Krueger

Readers: Alex Awai-Stewart and Laurie
Tanner

Musician: Ruth Murata

Aloha Hour: Open

June 22: Fourth Sunday of Pentecost

Title: *Daring Discipleship*

Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong

Scripture: Matthew 10:24-39

Greeter: Dawna Krueger

Readers: Alex Awai-Stewart and Laurie
Tanner

Musician: Ruth Murata

Aloha Hour: Dawna Krueger and Jan Saiki

June 29: Fifth Sunday of Pentecost

Title: *Holy Welcome*

Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong

Scripture: John 20:19-22, portions of Acts 2

Greeter: Dawna Krueger

Readers: Alex Awai-Stewart and Laurie
Tanner

Musician: Ruth Murata

Aloha Hour: Kosraen Etawi

small as a few wrong words or expressions could topple a body of believers. So, let us mind our words, our thoughts, and our actions as we seek to live like Christ.

When challenged, think "how can I bring about peace?" "Do I really need to say what's on my mind, or how can I say it without being hurtful?" When that fails, just think WWJD- what would Jesus do?

Let's come together as a church, building up one another, until we all reach unity in the faith.

In this with you,
Kahu Kalani

Did you know the gargoyles on the cathedral are there to scare away evil AND also serve as downspouts to direct water runoff away from the building? Water is bad for the stonework.



Buildings and Grounds Community

Work on the sidewalk from Kanda to Endo Hall is proceeding during the month of June. Thanks to a member, we have a Contractor to do the digging for the sidewalk and putting in a compacted base to help prevent cracking. The actual excavation and preparation work will take two weeks during which time **entry to Endo Office will be DETOURED to the front door**, facing Vineyard Street.

On Saturday, June 20, we will start forming the sidewalk. We have a carpenter neighbor who will be helping. LOTS OF HELP will be needed after the excavation to wheelbarrow the dirt out of the area.

The concrete will be poured on Saturday, June 27. HELP IS NEEDED for this portion as well beginning at 7:00am. Mahalo for any support you can provide.

'Īao Preschool

We are learning about the life cycle of butterflies! The children helped pick crown flower leaves from Auntie Dawna's house, and we made a caterpillar house. They loved taking turns gently holding the caterpillars. We then took time to observe the caterpillars and draw what we saw. Another child also has crown flowers at home and brought in more caterpillars to share and observe.



We celebrated Mother's Day by having a Mother's Day luncheon. We had spaghetti, garlic bread, salad and dessert!

On May 21, Malia's mom, Officer Noe, and Kahiau's grandpa, Officer Charlie—both sheriffs—brought their police car for the children to explore. They spoke with the children, showed them their equipment, and explained how police officers help keep people safe.



Justice and Witnessing Community

June is Pride Month. 🏳️‍🌈 What is the true purpose of Pride? 🏳️‍🌈

It is rooted in aloha — recognizing, respecting, and loving the divine spirit within every individual.

For generations, the LGBTQ+ community was forced into the shadows. Pride Month exists because heterosexual identity has never been marginalized in the same way, while queer individuals have had to fight simply for the right to exist safely and openly.

In traditional Hawaiian culture, māhū — individuals embodying both male and female spirit — were respected as healers, caretakers, and keepers of tradition. Pride is a return to that spirit of 'ohana (family) and kākou (all of us together), ensuring no one is excluded or left behind. It is our collective kuleana (responsibility) to build a community grounded in mālama — caring for one another with compassion and dignity.

As a simple poem reminds us:

“Pride is not a secret club,
Or doors that stay locked tight,
It is a simple promise,
That everyone has a right.
When everyone is safe, everyone is free.”

Let us lead with aloha today and every day!!!

Please join our Justice and Witnessing team by coming out and supporting our community at the Aloha Maui Pride Festival on Saturday June 13th from 3-8pm on Market Street in Wailuku. Hope to see you there. Happy Pride Month to ALL!!!

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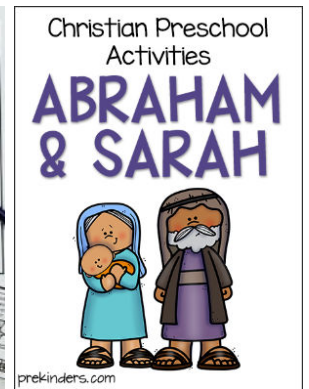
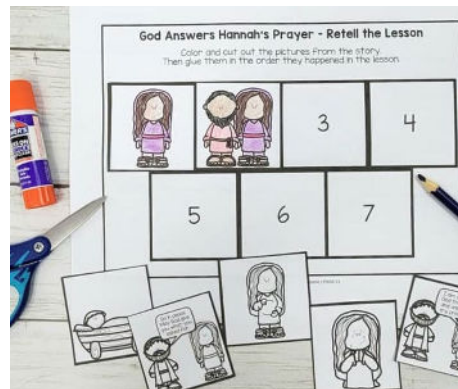
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Learning Community

Sunday School Highlights

Our Sunday School children spent May—and will continue through June—learning about heroes and villains in the Bible. On Mother’s Day, they had a special lesson on Ruth and Naomi. On Father’s Day, the focus will be on Joseph’s coat and dreams.



Preschool Partnership

Another important part of the Learning Community’s ministry is maintaining a relationship with the preschool. While Kahu Kalani was on vacation, Auntie Dawna led chapel for the keiki and shared stories about mothers in the Bible, including the mother of baby Moses, Mary and Elizabeth, Hannah’s answered prayers, and God’s promise to Abraham and Sarah.

Later in the day, she returned to read to the keiki as they settled down for nap time, giving the staff a chance to prepare for curriculum, accreditation, and have lunch break. On one of those days, the preschool needed another adult to read stories during nap time, and Auntie Dawna gladly stepped in.

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Helping at the preschool can include simple, joyful moments such as:

- sharing lunch conversation at the table,
- playing in the sandbox or racing trucks,
- swinging high into the sky,
- enjoying pretend haircuts and blow-dries,
- sliding at the water park, and
- joining in imaginative play and dress-up.


If you would like to help, please call the preschool at 808-242-1995 to find a good time to volunteer. The request for interesting items to use in the art center also remains open.

Stewarding Community

Mahalo for your donations to last month’s Strengthen the Church offering collected on May 24. It is one of the 5 for 5 Special Offerings in which ‘Īao UCC has always participated.

The newly adopted Policies and Practices document has our community overseeing all special fund raising and friend raising projects. We are currently working with Treasurer Bryn Turner to understand our role and responsibilities.

Offertory envelopes are provided in the church pews. The current design is a preview of the next Stewarding campaign’s theme: **“There Our Hearts Will Be”**. We will feature hearts throughout the year to reflect this theme. More details about the campaign will follow.



LOVE
‘Īao UCC

OFFERING

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

AMOUNT _____

Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also...
-Matthew 6:21

Worshipping Community

June is here, and there’s a lot to look forward to! On Sunday, June 7, Kahu Scott Landis will be preaching, with his sermon entitled “Building Altars.” We are very grateful to Kahu Scott for stepping in to lead the pulpit on this Communion Sunday. We also welcome back Ruth Murata who will be providing the music through the summer.

On June 14, we’ll finally get to welcome Kahu Kalani back to our Sunday worship after his trip to Europe with Avis. He spent most of May away, with just a quick stop on Maui, but now he’s home. We can’t wait to hear all the stories from their travels and catch up on everything we missed.

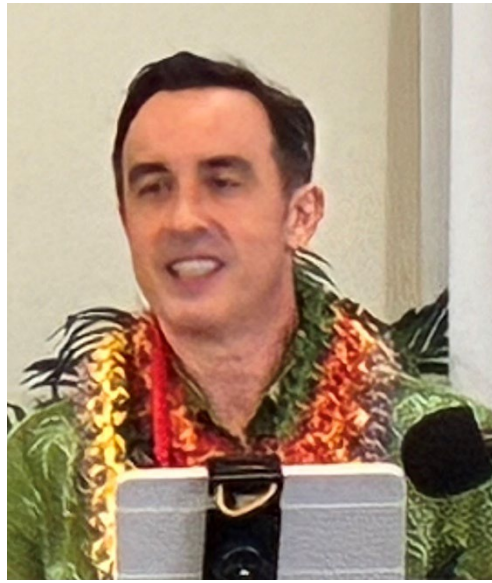
We really appreciate the pastors and speakers who help out ‘Īao UCC whenever we need someone to fill in. Thanks to their willingness to step in, our worship services kept running smoothly. Mahalo nui

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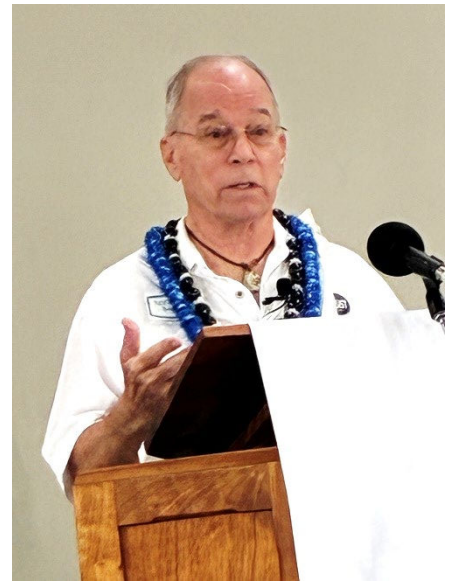
loa to Rev. Kyle Lovett, Keola Whittaker, Kahu Dennis Barger and Kahu Scott Landis for preaching during Kahu Kalani's absence. We are truly grateful for their support and commitment to our community.



Rev. Kyle Lovett



Keola Whittaker



Kahu Dennis Barger

May 31 was Youth and Graduate Sunday. We were pleased to have Caetlyn Johannes and Siena DeLima share the message with reflections by Darcean Phillip and Noah Johannes. Gergley Phillip, Bojay Petrus, AJ Tosier, and Jeviohn Yoruw serve as readers. We are so blessed to have Caetlyn and Siena share their faith as part of the Fellowship of Christian Athlete's parachurch organization. They are mentored by a group of faithful women and minister to student-athletes at the various high schools.



Be sure to check the church bulletin for upcoming events and activities. Whether you prefer fellowship gatherings with friends or helping out with outreach efforts, there are plenty of opportunities to connect and grow together. If you are interested in serving as a greeter or reader, or Aloha Hour, please reach out to one of our worship community members: Shannon, Katherine, Linda, Mayleen, Rena, or Carolyn. Additionally, there are openings for worship leader positions starting in August and continuing beyond. Your participation is always appreciated!

Food Pantry Update

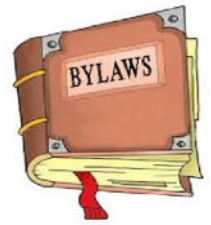
During the month of April, a total of 3,687 meals and snacks were served to 428 households. This includes 873 adults and 358 children. We have been fortunate for the generosity of the Maui Food Bank in providing an abundance of food items. In addition, local churches or individuals have donated as well. Please join us on Mondays, 9:30-2:00 to unload the pallets of food, prep the bags of fresh fruits and vegetables, or just be an ambassador of aloha, guiding the clients. Interestingly enough, Damien Awai, Susan King's son, helps load the pallet of food which is delivered to our "door".

"Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives." – Titus 3:14

All in the 'Ohana

By-Laws, Policies and Procedures

At the congregational meeting held on May 24, the new by-laws and policies and procedures were approved. This brings us into compliance and provides us with sound business practices and procedures. Mahalo to all those who worked so diligently on this.



Mother's Day 2026



What a special Mother's Day at 'Īao this year where we celebrate all moms: our own mom, birth moms, foster moms, step moms, moms to be, moms we have lost, moms with stranded relationships, mom's in laws, great grandmoms, grandmoms, fur moms, nature's moms, and everyone that has filled the role of mom at one time or another. Pastor Keola Whitaker filled our pulpit and our hearts with Mother's Day sermon, Christophe with music, and special gifts of tissue holders from the Carolyn Kamidoi, crocheted scrubbers created by Bert Akitake, and pocket quilts sewn by Anne Hill, Cynthia Snell, and Dawna Krueger. And last but not least, the Aloha Hour was prepared and served by the men of 'Īao. We are so blessed at 'Īao UCC.

Graduate Sunday, May 31

The Kosraean Etawi put out quite the spread to celebrate our nine graduates. Gergley Phillip will be moving up to 'Āao Intermediate, while eight seniors will spread their wings as they head for college, the military, or the workforce. The seniors include: Shanielle Alik Tilfas, Jaydee Hadley, Noah Johannes, Dorothy Nena, Carlyn Obet, Darcy Petrus, Darcean Phillip, and Pat Johnson Phillip.



Navigating the Islands: Culture, Health, and Community

The much-anticipated, once delayed, Navigating the Islands event was finally held on Saturday, May 30 at the Queen Ka'ahumanu Center. It was an afternoon focused on cultural pride, health education, community connection, and access to essential services.

Youth emcees Hamilton Ioanis of Pohnpei and Mara Zepty of the Marshall Islands began the event by recognizing the Micronesia comprised of Marshallese, Pohnpeian, Kosraean, Chuukese, Yapese, Palauan, and Hawaiian communities. A number of the community groups shared their beauty, history, and traditions through song and dance.



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Mahalo to all who came to help staff our table and share who we are as an open and affirming church which welcomes all persons regardless of cultural or ethnic backgrounds, and especially to Pastor Lauren who helped provide guidance to the event steering committee.



News Around the Mokupuni and the Conference

‘Aha O Nā Mokupuni ‘O Maui, Moloka‘i, a me Lāna‘i

The Spring Mokupuni was held on May 16 with about 30 in attendance at Wailuku Union Church. Our own **Cheryl Matsui** was elected as Treasurer for a four-year term. **Cynthia Snell** serves on the Committee on Ministry which oversees and provides support to the pastors of the churches. It was announced that Ulysses Pacil, of Maui Evangelical Church, fulfilled the requirements of an Authorized Licensed Minister. Lei of greetings and congratulations were given to Mitch Nelson, seated pastor of Keawala‘i Church and Verl Klassen, licensed Minister at Waihe‘e Church

A Hui Hou Pastor Ben Sheets

Pastor Ben Sheets concluded his ministry with Lāna‘i Union Church on May 31 and will be relocating to the continent after accepting a new call. During his time in ministry, Pastor Ben played an important role in both the Mokupuni and on the Hawai‘i Conference Council. He will be deeply missed, especially for his work with the Kosraean youth on Lāna‘i. Both Pastor Lauren and Cynthia Snell took part in his farewell service on May 31.



204th Aha Pae‘āina- Kūkulu Uapo ~ Building Bridges

The annual conference of the Hawai‘i Conference, United Church of Christ will take place Thursday, June 11 - Saturday, June 13, 2026 at Waipahu United Church of Christ. Pastor Kalani will be representing ‘Īao UCC with Joyleen Phillip serving as our Youth Delegate. The Aha Youth Event will take place Wednesday, June 10 - Saturday, June 13 at Camp Mokuleia. Dominic Defang, Makelyn Johannes, and Joyleen Phillip are attending with Caetlyn Johannes serving as chaperone. The youth will join the adults for the Makua meeting on Friday afternoon through Saturday.

June 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Location Key: S-Sanctuary K-Kanda Hall E-Endo Hall L-Lanai Z-Zoom	9a-2p Food Pantry- K 6:30-9:30 AA K	5:30-7:30 AI Anon District- K	5-6:30 Etawi K 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui- S	9:30 IPS Chapel S	11:30a Ladies Lunch Bunch- L 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship- S	7-8p AA Speaker K
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
2nd Sunday after Pentecost 10am Worship Communion 11:15 Learning Com. K 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S/K	9a-2p Food Pantry- K 6:30-9:30 AA K	12:45 Visitation	7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui- S	Kamehameha Day Office Closed 	6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship- S	Lāna'i Youth K 3-8pm PRIDE FESTIVAL 7-8p AA Speaker K
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
3rd Sunday after Pentecost 10a Worship 11:15 Stewarding K 11:15 Worshipping K Lāna'i Youth Leave 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S/K	9a-2p Food Pantry- K 6:30-9:30 AA K		Iao Pepa/Council Reports Due 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui- S	9:30 IPS Chapel S	JUNE 19 JUNETEENTH FREEDOM DAY 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship- S	7-8p AA Speaker K
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
4th Sunday after Pentecost 10a Worship 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S/K	9a-2p Food Pantry- K 6:30-9:30 AA K		5:45 Council- Z 7-8p 'Ukulele Hui- S	9:30 IPS Chapel S	6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship- S	8a Workday 7-8p AA Speaker K
28	28	30	<p>Happy Birthday this month to:</p> <p>1-Makana Nakanishi, 4-Josaiiah Warren, and Paul Obet, 7- Jarvis Yoruw, 10-Rita Whitford, 11 Caroline Belsom, 12- Isaac Phillip, 15-James Hadley, 18- Behonest Wichep, 20-Dorothy Nene and Corey Tanaka, 23- June Uyetake, 24-Linda Johannes, 28-Daniel Kamidoi, 28-Daecey Petrus, 29-Makelyn Johannes</p> 			
5th Sunday after Pentecost 10a Worship 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S/K	9a-2p Food Pantry- K 6:30-9:30 AA K					



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

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Office/Food Pantry **(808) 244–7353**
 Office hours: **Mon. to Thurs., 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**
or by appointment
Food Pantry Monday 11a-2p

Email: office@iaoucc.org
 Website: iaoucc.org
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
‘Āo Preschool Director	Florida Iniba

You are always welcome at ‘Āo UCC.

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