



A Monthly Newsletter of 'Īao United Church of Christ

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

July 2026

Kahu Kalani's Konnections

Welcome to **Summer 2026**! The children are out of school, food bills may be climbing, and many families are making plans for beach days, picnics, and travel. Summer is often a season of recreation, but it can also be a season of *re-creation*—a time to pause, reflect, and remember who we are and whose we are. Re-creation does not mean starting over from scratch; it means allowing God to shape us into the people we are still becoming.



When I searched for “ideas to re-create yourself,” I found many suggestions. Several common themes stood out, and each offers a helpful way to think about how God continues to renew us.

1. **Take a good look at yourself.** Wherever you are in life, God is still planting seeds of hope and growth within you. If you are younger, you may wonder when your gifts will be recognized. If you are older, you may feel the limits of a body that no longer moves as quickly as it once did. In every season, take time to see the goodness God has already poured into you—and consider how that goodness can now be shared with others.

“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; I know that full well.” – Psalm 139:14

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” – Ephesians 2:10

2. **Consider your outlook on life.** Are you more likely to see hope, or do you find yourself pulled toward doom and gloom? With all that is happening in the world, it is easy to become discouraged. When that happens, pause, take a deep breath, and turn your attention toward what brings comfort, peace, and perspective. Choose to dwell on what is wholesome and uplifting.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” – Philippians 4:8



**July 5: Sixth Sunday of Pentecost
(communion)**

Title: *"Lighten Your Load"*

Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong

Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Greeter: Gail Ideue

Readers: Makelyn Johannes and Carlyn
Obet

Musician: Ruth Murata

Aloha Hour: Jane Akitake

July 12: Seventh Sunday of Pentecost

Title: *Planting Seeds of Hope*

Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong

Scripture: Matthew 13: 1-9, 18-23

Greeter: Gail Ideue

Readers: Makelyn Johannes and Carlyn
Obet

Musician: Niko Nemoto

Aloha Hour: Avis and Kalani Wong

July 19: Eighth Sunday of Pentecost

Title: *Making Sense of this Mess*

Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong

Scripture: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Greeter: Gail Ideue

Readers: Makelyn Johannes and Carlyn
Obet

Musician: Ruth Murata

Aloha Hour: Open

July 26: Ninth Sunday of Pentecost

Title: *What's Worth?*

Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong

Scripture: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Greeter: Gail Ideue

Readers: Makelyn Johannes and Carlyn
Obet

Musician: Ruth Murata

Aloha Hour: Kosraen Etawi

3. **Consider your circle of friends.** As the saying goes, "No one is an island." We all rely on others and belong to a larger community. Be mindful of the voices that influence you. Seek relationships that encourage wisdom, faith, and growth, and be open to widening your circle so you can hear and see new things.

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." – 1 Corinthians 15:33

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. – Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. – Proverbs 18:24

Together, these three points remind us that re-creation begins with honest self-reflection, grows through a hopeful and faithful outlook, and is strengthened by the people who walk beside us. As we recognize the gifts God has placed within us, choose to focus on what is good and life-giving, and surround ourselves with relationships that encourage wisdom and growth, we become more open to the renewing work God is doing in every season of life.

May the summer of 2026 lead you into new and unexpected joys as God continues the work of renewal in your life. God has good things in store for you as you seek Him.

On this journey of life with you,

Kahu Kalani

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, this person is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."
– 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Moderator's Message



Aloha Friends and Families,

Happy July to each of you! I hope this newsletter finds you in good health and in joyful spirits. As always, if you or your 'ohana needs anything, please call our office at (808) 244-7353.

June is recognized nationally as Pride Month, a time to honor the courage, resilience, and love of our LGBTQ+ community.

"All Are Welcome" Isn't Enough

For many LGBTQ+ people of faith, church has not always been a place of safety or affirmation. Too often, they have been told—directly or indirectly—that their ability to love and be loved is unwelcomed. Because of this history, "All Are Welcome" can feel uncertain or conditional.

An Open and Affirming (ONA) church changes that. A public welcome tells LGBTQ+ seekers that they have a home in the United Church of Christ. An ONA covenant can be life-changing—and even lifesaving—especially for LGBTQ+ youth and LGBTQ+ kūpuna who need to know they are embraced fully and without hesitation.

ONA commitments also strengthen congregations. Many new members of ONA churches include young straight couples and families who want their children to grow in a faith community rooted in love, justice, and inclusion.

As St. Paul reminds us:

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Romans 15:7

We are proud to be LGBTQ+ people of faith who are active and involved members of an ONA congregation here at 'Īao United Church of Christ. Every one of us deserves a safe and loving place to grow in our faith.

Let us remember that the church is not just a building—we are the church. May our welcome be visible not only in our words, but in our actions. Let us reach out to our community, rather than waiting for others to find us. And may all who worship with us feel the presence of our loving God.

May we continue to lead with aloha, compassion, and love for all.

With Love and Aloha,
Your grateful co-moderator,

Shannon Ribao



Building and Grounds

The sidewalk connecting Kanda Hall and Endo Hall is complete. This new walkway provides a smoother, safer, and more accessible path between the two buildings. The last remaining portion of the project is the landscaping. A load of topsoil will fill the gap between the sidewalk and the lawn.

We are grateful to Mike Petersen, Peter Schell, Gregory Cavanis, and Rojac Trucking for their support through connections, discounts, and donations of time and materials. Mahalo also to everyone who contributed money, time, and talent to help bring this project to completion. Special thanks go to Dennis Hashiro for his determination in seeing the project through, and to Cynthia Snell for sharing her architectural skills to help ensure the proper slope, layout, and engineering.

It truly an army of skilled hands, willing helpers, and generous hearts—to bring this walkway to fruition. Kulo to all!



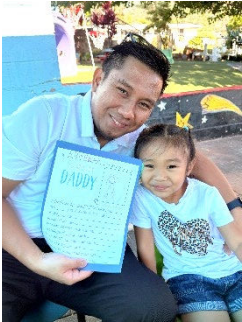
*Commit to the
Lord whatever you
do, and He will
establish your
plans.*

~ Proverbs 16:3



'Īao Preschool

Summer may be here, and our preschool remains in session. Many of our keiki have been traveling with their families and enjoying God's creation. We brought that spirit of discovery into the classroom on June 8 as we celebrated World Oceans Day. The children watched live feeds from aquariums around the world, then drew pictures of their favorite sea life.



Our dads and a few granddads joined us for our annual Father's Day breakfast on June 19. It was a joy for the children to welcome these special loved ones to our school.

We celebrated with our Butterflies on June 25th as they prepared to flutter off to kindergarten. It's sad to see them head out but they are ready and eager to



start in "Big School". Their graduation will be on July 17 starting at 5pm in the sanctuary. Our preschool will be on break from July 21-30, returning on Monday, August 3rd.

Justice and Witnessing

🌈 Mahalo from the Justice & Witnessing Community at 'Iao UCC 🌈

With grateful hearts, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who came out to support and help with the Aloha Maui Pride Festival held on Saturday, June 13th in Wailuku, Maui.

It truly takes a village, and we are deeply appreciative of each and every one of you who gave your time, energy, love, and support to make this event so meaningful and successful. Your presence helped create a beautiful space of aloha, inclusion, and celebration for our community.

To those who were unable to be there physically but were with us in spirit, mahalo as well. We felt your love, encouragement, and support surrounding us throughout the day. Together, we continue to build a community rooted in love, justice, acceptance, and belonging for all. Thank you for standing with us and for being part of this important work.



Learning Community



In June, our craft activity used recycled water bottles. The children decorated the bottles with Sharpie pens, then cut them so they could swirl. The finished creations turned out beautifully and will be displayed in the sanctuary.

In July, our lessons will include the following:

- July 5: The Parable of the Lost Son and Independence Day
- July 12: Joseph Sold by His Brothers
- July 19: Joseph and Potiphar
- July 26: Joseph in Prison

As always, we will continue working on Bible verses and practicing how to find the books of the Bible.

We are happy to welcome Paul Lackey to our community. Paul is Coreen's right-hand helper, assisting with crafts, finding games, making copies, and supporting computer needs. Welcome, Paul!

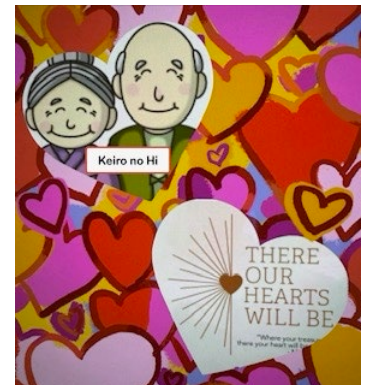
Our next meeting is scheduled for July 5th @ 11:15.

Stewarding Community

Save the Date: September 13 Worship Service

Summer is still here, but we are already looking ahead to a special doubleheader during worship on September 13: Keiro no Hi and the kickoff of the Stewarding Campaign.

Keiro no Hi, or Respect for the Elderly, will honor those who reached age 80 this year. The 2026–27 Stewarding Campaign will also begin with the theme *There Our Hearts Will Be*, starting with the Time & Talent survey. We hope this campaign encourages everyone to participate in the church's communities and missions. More details will follow.



After worship, please join us for a luncheon in Kanda Hall. Stewarding will provide the main dish, and side dishes or desserts are welcome. We hope to see you there!

A Glimpse into our Finances

Treasurer Bryn Turner will provide a brief monthly summary to keep the congregation informed about the church's finances. This month, our income has exceeded our expenses, which is encouraging news.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for a \$32,000 insurance bill, and we are also grateful to share that we have hired an office administrative assistant. Mahalo nui loa for your continued financial support of our church and its ministries.

‘Īao UCC Financials	May 2026	YTD
Last month's income	\$ 17,937	\$ 111,238
Last month's expenses	<u>\$ (5,275)</u>	<u>\$ (41,631)</u>
Income over (under) expenses	\$ 12,662	\$ 69,607

Food Pantry Update

During the first three Mondays of June, the food pantry distributed 10,426 pounds of food to neighbors in need.

The need remains strong. Even with generous deliveries from the Food Bank, many latecomers continue to miss out on fresh produce.

On June 1, we also welcomed 13 new families—62 men, women, and children—into our community of more than 300 friends who rely on the pantry for food support.

Our dear friends from Ala Lani Methodist Church are helping out by collecting an enormous amount of food and dropping it off in Kanda Hall.



Worshipping Community



As the FIFA World Cup heats up in July 2026, providing a glimpse into the soccer world, the 'Īao Pepa gives you a glimpse into 'Īao United Church of Christ's church life. This monthly newsletter keeps everyone in the loop with important information for our community.

During the June 21 service, we heard from our youth delegation who attended the 2026 'Aha Youth Event, held June 10–13 in Mokulē'ia. The youth spent time learning, sharing, and growing together, and they also joined the adults at Waipahu UCC for the 'Aha Makua portion of the 'Aha Pae'āina. Makelyn Johannes, Dominic Defang, and Joyleen Phillip reflected on the theme "Building Bridges," sharing what they learned and the bridges they felt called to build or cross as they continue growing as Christians.



Caetlyn Johannes served as a chaperone at the retreat and shared a testimony that moved both youth and adults.



We were also graced with the musical talents of Kuoni Maurer who performed the postlude. He is a student of Ruth Murata. Mahalo Ruth for sharing this gifted individual with us.

To help us get through the slower summer weeks, a great group of ladies and Kahu Kalani, will lead our worship services throughout July. The Worship Team includes our greeter, Gail Ideue, and readers, Makelyn Johannes and Carlyn Obet. In addition, we have two outstanding musicians, Ruth Murata and Niko Nemoto (on July 12), sharing their talents.

Come hang out with us for worship in July! We're excited for good times together—both in reflection and lots of fellowship. As we enjoy the World Cup buzz and the cozy feeling of community at 'Īao United Church of Christ, everyone is welcome to join in, celebrate the season, and support each other during these summer days.

See you at our Sunday services which start at 10:00 AM.

All in the‘Ohana



Please welcome our new office administrative assistant, Diana George, who started her new position on June 22, 2026. Diana is a wedding officiant and may look familiar to you because she has volunteered at our church food pantry in the past. Diana is in the office from Monday-Wednesdays, 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. and on Thursday from 9:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. Aloha, Diana!

It's always a joy to talk story with Rita Whitford on our monthly visits. We learn more and more about her exciting and adventurous life each time we meet.

If you have a loved one you would like us to visit, please call the church office. We'd love to sit and chat with all those who are a part of our 'ohana.



It's grad party time and how great it would be if you could celebrate that special loved one with some awesome decorations. What first started out as a hobby for Simiko Yoruw became a passion to serve a community (especially Micronesia) that has limited access to party planners and event decorators.

Simiko shared, "It is my goal is to bring beautiful, customized decor to every celebration and help make each event feel truly special. My business name is "Decor By SHY". My motto is "your vision, my hands". You can find me on FB, Instagram or simply email me at decorbyshy@gmail.com for any inquiries."

Best wishes Simiko on bringing joy to others!



‘ĪAO UNITED CHURCH OF
CHRIST

*"We are a people of God
living and sharing the love
of Christ and reflecting
that love in words and
actions."*

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Happy Birthday 3-Gophia Mongkeya, Anela Awai-Stewart, 11-Howard Ikeda, 11-Kathy Tanaka, 11-Kavalu Kurr, 13-Jack Yoruuv, Coreen Matsui-Lackey, 17-Jackie Murai, 28-Jennifer Saito, 30-Francis Yinmed 			1	2 9:30 IPS Chapel S	3 Independence Day (observed) 11:30a Ladies Lunch Bunch- L OFFICE CLOSED 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship-S	4 Independence Day  7-8p AA SpeakerK
5 6 th Sunday after Pentecost 10a-Worship 11:15a-Learning Com. E 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S/K	6 9a-2p Food Pantry K 6:30-9:30p AA K	7 5:30-7:30p AI Anon District K	8 6-7p Etawi K	9 9:30a IPS Chapel S	10 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship S	11 7-8p AA SpeakerK
12 7 th Sunday after Pentecost 10a-Worship 11:15 Worshipping Comm. K 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S/K	13 9a-2p Food Pantry- K 9-10 IPS 6:30-9:30p AA K	14 9-10 IPS S 12:45p Visitation	15 9-10 IPS S	16 9:30a IPS Chapel S	17 9a-8p IPS Graduation S 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship K	18 9-10a B&G Community E 7-8p AA SpeakerK
19 8 th Sunday after Pentecost 10a-Worship 10:50a Stewarding E 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S/K	20 9a-2p Food Pantry- K 6:30-9:30p AA K	21	22 'Tao Pepa/Council Reports Due	23	24 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship-S	25 7-8p AA SpeakerK
26 9 th Sunday after Pentecost 10a-Worship 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S/K	27 9a-2p Food Pantry- K 6:30-9:30p AA K	28	29 5:45 Council-Z	30 9a-4p Shelter Dinner Prep K 10-11 IPS Supply Drop-off W	31 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship S	Location Key: S-Sanctuary K-Kanda Hall E-Endo Hall L-Lanai W-Watanabe Z-Zoom



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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
Administrative Assistant	Diana George
Pianists for July	Ruth Murata and Niko Nemoto
Newsletter Editor	Kalani Wong
'Īao Preschool Director	Flerida Iniba

You are always welcome at 'Īao UCC.

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