

196th 'Aha Pae'aina Votes Plan for the Future

BY ERIC ANDERSON,
CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS

Delegates to the 196th 'Aha Pae'aina June 8-9 overwhelmingly affirmed the Mission Statement, Vision Statement, and Strategic Initiatives recommended by the Hawai'i Conference Strategy Team, charting a course toward a future embodied in the vision statement: "We are one 'ohana: a unified, radiant, and transforming expression of the body of Christ."

After a year of preparation, public comment, feedback, and revision, the plan included input from over five hundred people. "Our inclusiveness gave us hope and confidence that the many voices reflected the Conference," said Council Chair Iese Tuuao.

"We have heard a great hunger, particularly from our young people, that church should feel like family."

Delegates focused on the plan. Team members reviewed each initiative—Training and Spiritual Formation,



Gabrielle Chavez presents the new vision statement to delegates.

Mission-based Financial Stewardship, an Expansive Concept of Church, Valuing the Gifts and Wisdom of the Next Generation, Speaking as Prophets in our Time, Living Aloha, and Creating Organization Support for the Vision. They joined in *Lectio Divina* study around the vision, and in

Bible study around the initiatives.

The longest presentation focused on the piece that required the most work in the Team: the Mission Statement. Many revisions led to the words adopted: "Sent forth by the

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WRYE: Into the Water

BY DIANE WEIBLE,
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA NEVADA
CONFERENCE MINISTER

More than 400 youth and adult leaders at the Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE), like Peter with Jesus, demonstrated willingness to get out of the boat and into the water. Youth and adult leaders from the eight UCC Conferences of the Western Region gathered for a week of community, worship, music, workshops, and excursions as they lived out the theme, *E Hele Mai I Ka Wai*, or, Come to the Water. The event, June 25-29, was hosted by the Hawai'i Conference at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

In the opening worship on Monday night, Rev. Traci Blackmon, UCC Executive Minister for Justice and Local Church Ministries, preached on Peter finding the courage to get out of the boat, reminding all that in order to walk on water, you first must get out of the boat.

And, get out of the boat, participants did! Whether it was square dancing to start off the 'Aha Mele or singing or gathering in 'Ohana groups where friendships were made, there were many moments of laughter and cheers and even a few moments of healing tears. There were also many moments of deep listening as the 'Ohana groups traveled to various cultural

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A Vision, a Mission and a Plan

BY GABRIELLE CHAVEZ, INTERIM CONFERENCE MINISTER

*Write the vision;
make it plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it.*
—Habakkuk 2:2

After a year-long journey of self-assessment, discussion, prayer, and numerous revisions, delegates to the 196th 'Aha Pae'aina of the Hawai'i Conference adopted a strategic plan by a nearly unanimous vote.

As our outgoing moderator Iese Tuuao noted, it is not a perfect plan, but it is our best collective effort to discern and agree upon what God is calling church members, congregations, associations, staff, and committees of the Conference to do and become in the next 5–10 years.

Our new plan begins with the vision inspired by John 17:21 and Romans 12:2 of becoming “one ohana, a unified, radiant, and transforming expression of the Body of Christ.”

For the mission statement we adopted these words echoing Micah 6:8 and Romans 8:19: “Sent forth by the Spirit, we walk humbly in Christ’s footsteps seeking peace, justice, and the renewal of all creation.” As tasked by last year’s ‘Aha Pae’aina, the strategic planning committee found plain words for the Trinity’s revealed plan for humanity, the

plan of salvation that Jesus called his disciples to pray for, the coming kingdom of heaven on earth.

Beautiful Hawaiian images were chosen for the new vision, mission, and seven strategic initiatives to illumine and enhance the words of our plan. I’d like to focus on the first—and to my mind and heart—foundational strategic initiative: theological and spiritual formation, with its image of a great banyan tree.

As we polled the members all around the Conference in many settings over the past year asking what our priorities should be, over and over again we heard “theological and spiritual formation” as the top choice. This is as it should be, for what are church members, congregations, associations, staff, and missional teams of the Hawai'i Conference here for but to nurture wise and loving disciples of Christ as job #1?

This strategic initiative recognizes that we have understood this mandate all along and asks us to spread, deepen, and ground the Christian training and nurture of both lay folk and pastors more comprehensively, similar to a banyan tree that sends many branches and roots from its central trunk to take root far away. Some have noted a

banyan tree is invasive, but with training, its vigor is a good thing and something to encourage in this Conference.

The new plan encourages every setting of the Hawai'i Conference to engage prayerfully in actions that bring the seven initiatives to fruition. It is a horizontal movement, not a top down approach. As we respond to the Spirit’s impulse and guidance, inspiration will come, new ideas and approaches will be offered, and the plan will adapt and evolve.

My prayer is that each member and body comprising the HCucc will meditate and pray over the vision, mission, and seven strategic initiatives, discerning where Jesus is calling out each person’s gifts to serve so that we indeed become “one *ohana*, a unified, radiant and transforming expression of the Body of Christ sent forth by the Spirit, walking humbly in Christ’s footsteps, pursuing peace, justice, and the renewal of all creation.”

With you in mission, vision, and action,

Gabrielle



Conference Minister Search Committee Named

A search committee for the settled Conference Minister was appointed by the Conference Council in April. Committee members are: **Rosemarie Caberto** (Lāna'i Union Church), **Carolyn David** (Central Union Church), **Wayne Higa** (Ka'ahumanu Church), **Phyllis Meighen** (Lihue Christian Church), **Wahineaukai Mercado** (Kalapana Maunakea First Hawaiian Congregational Church), **Miguel Morales** (Maui Evangelical

Church), **Janice Ogoshi** (Hawai'i Kai UCC), **Joan Sakaba** (Kailua Christian Church), and **George Winchell** (Hokuloa UCC). **Elwood Kita** (Church of the Holy Cross) has been named Chairperson of the committee. Their first meeting was May 12 with UCC Conference Minister Search Coordinator **Lee Albertson**. Applicants for the position should submit a profile to, or contact, Lee Albertson at albertsonl@ucc.org.



God
is still
speaking

The Friend is published six times a year by:
**The Hawai'i Conference
of the United Church of Christ**
1848 Nu'uauu Ave., Honolulu, HI 96817

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sites to learn about Hawaiian culture and participate in service projects.

Worship led by Conference delegations throughout the week celebrated both the uniqueness of each Conference and the unity expressed in coming together for worship. The 'Aha Mele shared talents of music and dance. At times the cheers of affirmation from the audience seemed to rock the Campus Ballroom at UH. Thursday was spent at the Polynesian Cultural Center experiencing various island cultures.

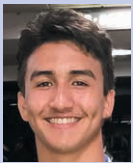
The event ended on Friday the way it began—with worship. Prior to Hawai'i Interim Conference Minister



Hawai'i youth play host to WRYE.

Gabrielle Chavez's leading everyone in a Communion liturgy, Keoki Kiwaha, Puka'ana Church (Kona), summed up the week saying, "On Monday we came to the water. Today we go out emboldened, impassioned . . . to seek justice for all."

Youth Voices at WRYE



Ali'i Brown
Hawai'i Conference

"I was truly blessed to go to this camp and I had fun meeting new friends, but I am grateful that I also became closer to God."



Tamrat Wagener
Central Pacific Conference

"Everybody is so kind. I felt like this place could be home for anybody. I just graduated and I'm studying to be a teacher so I'm hoping to come back to Hawai'i and see what teaching programs they have here."



Lea Borgesen
Pacific Northwest Conference

"I thought it was really cool that we got to create our own worship for all the youth in this region of our denomination."



Naomi Pfeiffer & Grace Clark
Central Pacific Conference

"I had an idea of how big [the church] was... but I didn't realize how much diversity was in the UCC churches."



Charlie McQuinn
Southern California Nevada Conference

"I was pleasantly surprised at how youth-led the event was and how educational it was, incorporating the local culture into the conference."



Mikayla Haas & Margaret Houser
Rocky Mountain Conference

"The connections we've made [at these church events] in the last two years are the relationships we look forward to every summer. The conferences have introduced us to new cultures and ways of connecting to God as well as wonderful human beings."

mission Offering

Neighbors in Need

Neighbors In Need (NIN) is a mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States.

The Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM) and its witness among indigenous churches and people receives one-third of NIN funds. Two-thirds finance a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through awarded grants to UCC organizations.

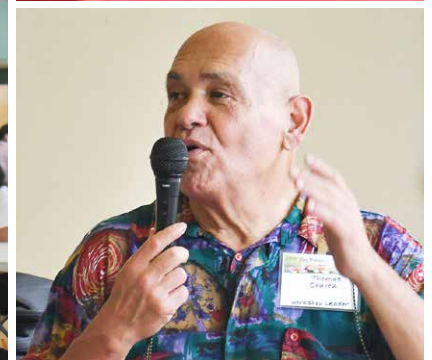
Grants ranging from \$1,000—\$10,000 are awarded for projects that address one of the following areas: the rights and freedoms of all persons, environmental justice, or economic justice, and whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy.

The suggested date to receive the offering is World Communion Sunday, October 7, 2018, but churches may select another Sunday.

For more information and to apply for a grant, visit www.ucc.org/nin.

196th 'Aha Pae'aina

Delegates and visitors from throughout the Hawai'i Conference gathered at Community Church of Honolulu for the 196th 'Aha Pae'aina June 6–9. Approximately 175 people from 63 churches were in attendance.



Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE) 2018

More than 400 youth and adult leaders from eight UCC conferences converged at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa June 25–29 for the Western Regional Youth Event (WRYE).





Three Conferences Vote to Go Forward Together, As One

The Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island Conferences of the United Church of Christ made history on June 16 when they voted overwhelmingly to form a new unified Conference in which they will not only do ministry together, but to which

they will invite other religious and secular organizations to join. The new Conference will need to be approved by the UCC's national governing body, General Synod, in June 2019. The Conferences will move to a single staff and budget starting January 1, 2020.



Hawai'i UCC Churches, Lives Disrupted by Volcanic Eruptions

Recent fissure eruptions since May 17 have affected three UCC congregations on the island of Hawai'i. As the lava continues with no end in sight, leadership and members alike have joined together for prayer services, food, water, and monetary donations to help their fellow neighbors.

News briefs are adapted from *UCC News*, the online news portal for the United Church of Christ. For more details and other stories, visit www.ucc.org/news.

'Aha Pae'aina, continued from page 1

Spirit, we walk humbly in Christ's footsteps pursuing peace, justice, and the renewal of Creation."

Consultant Cynthia Scherr reminded delegates that the plan is just a beginning. By the end of the 'Aha, sheets of newsprint bore the ideas and the names of people interested in each initiative. The most important next step, Cynthia said, is to show up.

Delegates approved the 2019 budget, aware that it had been prepared without reference to the Strategic Plan and would require revision.

Fed in body by the hospitality of Community Church of Honolulu, UCC Judd Street, and Nu'uanu Congregational Church, and in spirit by worship, music, and the sacrament of Holy Communion presided over by Interim Conference Minister Gabrielle Chavez, the delegates returned home to begin the work of making the vision come to life in the Hawai'i Conference, in their home churches, and in their souls.

Around the 'Aha Pae'aina



Daniel Lee Grady
Keolahou Congregational

"All this is new to me. I'm hoping I can be here next year because I have something to work with now, something to build on. I can see that the church is a lot larger than I thought it was."



Laurie Hamano
Nu'uanu Congregational

"I appreciate all the hard work that went into the strategic plan, and I hope that we can bring it all back to our church to see if we can continue their work."



David Rivers
Central Union Church

"I'm excited that we have a game plan and now it's time to start playing the game."



Joyclynn Costa
Kalanikahua Hou Congregational

"I think this 'Aha Pae'aina is one that is invigorating and hopeful. I pray for each and every one that participates in all of the churches that will benefit from these initiatives."



Elijah Lautej
Kauai First Marshallese

"I am a 7th grader and this was my first time at the 'Aha Pae'aina. I hope there will be more youth here next year."



Alan Patadlas
Honolulu Cosmopolitan UCC

"It seems we are being united, and we now have a clear path to go, a clear vision, mission, and goal. And the people also—I love to hear and see them."

Highlights from the Website

Go to www.hcucc.org to learn more about these and many more stories from around the Conference.

Pastoral Changes

Rex Piercy concluded his interim ministry at Hanapepe United Church of Christ on May 20.

David Hirano ended his interim ministry at Pearl City Community Church on June 24.

Gordon Marchant began his ministry as Senior Pastor at Pearl City Community Church on July 1.

Services of Ordination and Installation

Terry Yasuko Ogawa was ordained by the O'ahu Association on April 15 at Church of the Crossroads.

Michael Warren was ordained as Pastor and Teacher of Kalapana Maunakea First Hawaiian Congregational Church by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches on April 21.

Joseph Medlin was installed as Pastor of Hukuloa United Church of Christ by the Hawai'i Island Association on May 5.

Kenneth Makuakane was ordained and installed as Pastor and Teacher of Kawaiaha'o Church by the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches on May 5.

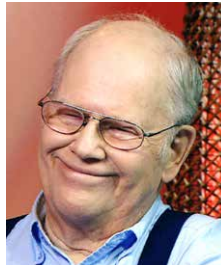
Conference Office Transition

Dorothy Lester returned to the Hawai'i Conference staff as an Acting Associate Conference Minister on a part-time basis with primary responsibility for working with the Tri-Isle Association. She continues to serve as Pastor for Lāna'i Union Church.

Jayne Ryan Kuroiwa joined the Hawai'i Conference staff as a part-time Administrative Assistant for Search and Call.

Kenneth Makuakane ended his ministry as Papa Makua and Associate Conference Minister for Congregational Vitality on June 29. He is Senior Pastor at Kawaiaha'o Church.

In Memory



Herbert M. "Monty" Richards, Jr., 88, Co-Chair of the Hawai'i Conference Foundation Board of Trustees, died on June 4 in San Francisco, CA. Monty came from a missionary family and his father, Herbert M. Richards, Sr., was instrumental in the founding of the Hawai'i Conference Foundation. Monty was very active as a business and community leader.



Ronald R. Williams, 66, Senior Pastor of Community Church of Honolulu since 2008, died unexpectedly on June 17. He was ordained in 1991 and served 27 years in ministry in the American Baptist Churches USA and the United Church of Christ. He was Chairperson of the O'ahu Association Committee on Ministry.

Conference Calendar of Events

July 28	State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches Board
August 4	Conference Council and Foundation Trustees
August 9	O'ahu Association Board of Directors
August 10-11	Tri-Isle ETCL "Atonement: How Jesus Saves Us"
August 17	Admissions Day (Office closed)
August 25	Conference Minister Search Committee
September 3	Labor Day (Office closed)
October 5-6	AHEC 'Aha Halawai
October 13	Conference Council and Foundation Trustees
October 27	State Council of Hawaiian Congregational Churches Board

Thanks to our friends, *The Friend* is free of charge to anyone who requests it. We offer our sincere mahalo to those who have generously given a monetary gift to help defray publication costs. A gift of \$10 will pay for one person's subscription for one year. Gifts may be sent to the Hawai'i Conference UCC, 1848 Nu'uuanu Avenue, Honolulu, HI, 96817.



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July 2018 'Aha Pae'aina Edition

Our Historical Roots

REV. KIM ON CHONG (1910-1996)

BY ELEANORE ATHERTON CHONG



Born in North Kohala in 1910, the twelfth of fifteen children, Kim On Chong knew at an early age that he wanted to be a minister.

His siblings recall him as a boy preaching in the forest with only birds as his congregation.

Kim On's parents, Chong How Kong and Pan Siu Chin, came to Hawaiʻi from the Basel Mission in Chong Lok, China. Kim On and his siblings were raised as Christians in Ainakea, on the Bond Estate, where

his father was the overseer. In 1925 his family moved to Honolulu.

After graduation from McKinley High School in 1928, Kim On set aside dreams of ministry and sought a full-time job to help support the family. Fortunately, he found a job at Castle & Cooke, Inc., working as an office boy for the president, Frank Cooke Atherton. When Atherton questioned him about his "life plan," Kim On proudly answered, "I want to go into the ministry." Impressed with his ambition, Atherton agreed to pay Kim On's way through the University of Hawaiʻi and Auburn Theological Seminary.

In April 1938, Kim On was ordained at First Chinese Church, and he and his new wife, Pearl Au

Chong, left for Wailuku Chinese Church on Maui. In the midst of World War II, he was called to be the first full-time chaplain at Mid-Pacific Institute. He remained there for 33 years.

He preached in notable pulpits: St. John's Cathedral, Denver; Old South Church, Boston; and City Temple, London, and in a number of Hawaiʻi churches.

Through 68 years of ministry he focused on ensuring the future of the church. His 1988 Jubilee sermon at Central Union says it best: "The church of today must produce . . . out of her own ranks some of its choicest sons and daughters—young men and women of vision . . . with clear intelligence and spiritual understanding."