

Stewardship Is Theme of Leaders Event in February

Don Hill, former Director of Philanthropy and Stewardship for the United Church of Christ, will be the keynote speaker at the Church Leaders Event to be held at Nu'uano Congregational Church on February 27, 2016.



Don, who runs Don Hill Consulting in Cleveland, will address the theme of stewardship. Complementing his presentation will be workshops on the same theme, including those by Cheri Lovell, a consultant in her own firm, Mission Based Money.

Both Don and Cheri have been presenters at Hawai'i Conference events in the past, including 'Aha Pae'aina, seminars and continuing education classes, and have also consulted with individual churches.



Cheri Lovell leads a workshop at the 'Aha Pae'aina last June.

Other workshops will include topics helpful to moderators, treasurers, officers, committee chairs, worship planners and other church leaders.

Past attendees have praised the event as a valuable opportunity to network with other church leaders. Participants have said

that they gained concrete resources and knowledge to take back and improve their ministry and leadership.

Sharon Matsuyama of Puka'ana Congregational Church said, "Small Hawaiian membership churches...are afraid to come because they feel that it's not for them. But it really is when you think about the different workshops being offered. It is helpful no matter what size church you are."

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Brown Endowment Supports Education of Hawai'i Pastors

Hawai'i pastors and candidates for ministry have benefited greatly from a national endowment that provides funds for education.

Thanks to the Helen and Richard Brown Endowment, UCC conferences, seminaries and global partners are able to provide individual scholarships and group grants that support the education of pastors. To date, more than five thousand men and women have benefited from the fund.

In Hawai'i, Brown Endowment grants have been received to support the Conference's clergy retreats and workshops, and several members in discernment—students or candidates for ministry—have been awarded scholarships to attend seminary or General Synod.



Ministers and members in discernment attend the Clergy Retreat last spring in Kailua-Kona.

The endowment was established in the 1990s by Richard and Helen Brown, UCC church members whose goal was to support pastoral education. Richard was a radio broadcaster, who owned several Minnesota radio stations before starting his own broadcasting school.

Toward the end of their lives, Helen suffered from Alzheimer's disease and Richard's painful arthritis limited him to a wheelchair. The couple, despite having the means to afford the best healthcare, decided to give their money to charity and then took their own lives in 1994.

The Browns' gift of \$5 million has grown, and the income now provides over \$300,000 in grants and scholarships annually, including to 66 members in discernment preparing for ordained ministry.

During 2015, the Hawai'i Conference received \$7,500 that helped bring clergy to three different programs: Annual

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The Other Cheek

by Charles C. Buck, Conference Minister

*How long, O Lord, shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?
Or cry to you, "Violence!" and you will not save?
Destruction and violence are before me;
Strife and contention arise (Habakkuk 1:2-3).*

Road rage. Internet flaming. Nursing a grudge.

It begins with a word or act, answered in kind, prompting a counter-attack, then another, and finally all-out war.

It happens all the time, and if not in ourselves, then certainly in our culture. Who among us, when hurt or struck, is not tempted to retaliate?

So it came as no surprise to hear France's president, François Hollande, announce to his parliament that "France is at war." Responding to the bombings and mass shootings three days earlier, he promised revenge "against the jihadist menace that threatens not just France."

Hollande's declaration played well to his crowd. Not only was he doing what comes naturally, but he was following the now accepted script for terror attacks: Hit the enemy back. Just as the U.S. did after 9/11. And to be sure, make it a "pre-emptive strike," that is, make sure to strike *first* so that the enemy, whether Al Qaeda or ISIS, cannot strike back.

Why feed the hand that bites you?

Responding to retaliation seems to make sense. That's the point a community activist wanted to make with me when she learned I was a Christian minister. She said, "The problem with Christians is that they always want to 'turn the other cheek' instead of fighting. What good does that do?" She had in mind, of course, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, in which he admonished his disciples not to practice retaliation, that is "eye for eye and tooth for tooth." Her point was, why feed the hand that bites you?

In the present war on terror, we have yet to see if retaliation works. The verdict so far? American soldiers are still fighting the longest war in U.S. history, and most ordinary Americans continue to line up for the privilege of taking off their shoes and emptying bags of laptops and liquids at airport security checkpoints. Meanwhile, terrorist bombs explode and kill innocent people around the world.

We should know better. In many wars and feuds throughout history and even today, retaliation has been the response,

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but never a solution. The best analysis or critique comes from a fictional family feud that Mark Twain narrates in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. The main character, Huck, stays for awhile in the home of the Grangerfords, who are very wealthy, very refined and very devout. So he is surprised one day to see Buck, a Grangerford son about his age, attempt to kill a young man by the name of Shepherdson. Huck learns that the Grangerford and Shepherdson families have been at war for a long time.

Privately Huck asks Buck why he wanted to kill the Shepherdson. "What did he do to you?"

"Hun? He never done nothing to me."

"Well, then, what do you want to kill him for?"

"Why nothing—only it's on account of the feud."

"What's a feud?"

"A feud is this way. A man has a quarrel with another man, and kills him; then that other man's brother kills *him*; then the other brothers, on both sides, goes for one another; then the *cousins* chip in—and by-and-by everybody's killed off, and there ain't no more feud. But it's kind of slow, and takes a long time."

In the present war on terror, we have yet to see if retaliation works.

Responding to violence with violence begets...well, yet more violence. Even if in the end, "there ain't no more feud," there's still all the "collateral damage," all the innocent blood shed, along the way.

The typical does not have to be the inevitable. Even though our first response to the unkind word, the rude gesture, and the hostile act may be to lob the same right back at 'em, we can break the cycle of violence by trying another way. If my community activist friend could understand that "turning the other cheek" does not necessarily mean mere passivity, but some word or action that breaks the cycle of violence, then she might discover not just that it does some good. It may even be the solution.



God is still speaking



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Blue Christmas Services Offer Comfort and Light

For many, the words “Blue Christmas” remind them of Elvis Presley. But for some others, it takes on an entirely different meaning.

For Jayne Ryan Kuroiwa, Pastor of Windward United Church of Christ, Blue Christmas is a very special worship service.



“The key point of the worship is the lighting of four candles for loss, grief, survivors, or hope. People then come forward and light a tea candle from one of those four candles. They have permission to pray or speak aloud while they come forward and light their candle, but most are silent. When I stand behind that table I see such sorrow, often tears.”

Since 1988, Blue Christmas services have been offered in a growing number of places, including Hawai‘i, as more and more people recognize that not everyone gets warm, fuzzy, family feelings at this time of year. These worship services, which can take many different shapes and formats, are all designed to give people a chance to grieve, cry, and remember that the Christ-child came into the world for them, too.

“Most touching was the couple whose daughter was killed,” Jayne said. “They were members of one of the mega-churches, but were so grateful to have somewhere to acknowledge their grief and their faith at the same time.”

One key feature of Blue Christmas services is the provision of a quiet, safe place for people to embrace—and express—the wide range of feelings that can come with the intense Christmas season. For those who have lost loved ones, are far away from family, or have recently lost a job or home, these services can be comforting and powerful, offering a poignant reminder that “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the light” (John 1:5).

Curricula such as *Whole People of God* and *Seasons of the Spirit* include Blue Christmas resources each year. To find other worship liturgies and resources, go to the Advent Resources page of the Hawai‘i Conference website (www.hcucc.org).

(Leaders Event, continued from page 1)

Examples abound of the Church Leaders Event making a difference. “This event has helped our church board reorganize and run more efficiently,” said Debbie Mahuna, treasurer of Ka‘ahumanu Church.

“If there was one word to describe the Church Leaders Event, it would be empowering—personally, professionally, and generally,” said Dennis Barger, moderator of Keolahou Congregational Church.

Full information, including registration and workshop descriptions, will be mailed to churches in January.

Churches Can Help Families Discuss End-of-Life Issues

When death approaches, getting right with God is a priority for many people.

But Daniel Fischberg, a physician at Queen’s Medical Center who specializes in palliative care, would also like to see discussion of end-of-life care be a top priority for his patients before serious illness strikes.

At a gathering of O‘ahu Association clergy on November 10, he said, “There is solid evidence that even a tiny bit of conversation about this can make all the difference in the world.”

To illustrate, he shared stories of two patients who were diagnosed with terminal cancer—one who had left an advance directive, a set of instructions specifying the kind of treatment the patient desires after falling ill and unable to speak for oneself; and another with no advance directive and no way to communicate because of dementia.



Jeannette Kojane, Executive Director of Kōkua Mau, discussed end-of-life care with O‘ahu Association clergy.

The second patient watched with anguish and then died as his children, estranged from one another, quarreled over the care each thought he should receive. The first patient, who had consulted with an advance care planner and left clear wishes to forgo any aggressive treatment, died at peace with her family and herself.

Also presenting on the topic of end-of-life care were Clarence Liu, a retired Hospice Hawai‘i chaplain, and Jeannette Kojane, Executive Director of Kōkua Mau, a consortium of organizations providing hospice and palliative care in Hawai‘i.

Jeannette echoed Daniel’s advice to discuss end-of-life care early, especially topics such as avoiding unnecessary suffering, ensuring physical comfort, finding emotional support, and lessening the burden on family and the fear that one will die alone.

Although these are difficult topics, Kōkua Mau offers resources to ease the process, such as sample advance directive and Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment forms; listings of hospice providers and palliative care programs; informational videos; trained speakers and more.

“We want people to know they are not alone and there are people to help,” she said. “People are afraid to discuss death, but we see over and over again the importance of planning ahead.”

In response, one attendee shared how stressful and exhausting it had been to be a caregiver for her father for two years. “As much as I loved him, after three months I was ready

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Fall Youth Camp Creates Memories

Over fifty youth and adult leaders, who came from every island, spent a memorable time at the 2015 Fall Youth Camp, October 4–7, at Camp Erdman on the North Shore of O‘ahu.



Associations Called to Fall Meetings

All five associations of the Hawai‘i Conference held Fall gatherings. Clockwise from right: Tri-Isle Association met at Kamehameha Schools Maui Campus on September 5; Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches met at Haili Church on October 2–3; O‘ahu Association met at Pearl City Community Church on October 10; Hawai‘i Island Association met on October 24 at Imiola Congregational Church; and Kauai Association met at Church of the Pacific on November 1.



(Brown Endowment, continued from page 1)

Conference Clergy Retreat, New Clergy Orientation, and Equipping Tomorrow's Church Leaders.

One-third of the grant supported the clergy retreat last spring in Kailua-Kona. Over forty ministers and members in discernment gathered to hear four distinguished scholars speak about "Christianity and World Religions." Many of those in attendance said that this was the first time that they had had a chance to discuss important social and religious issues in a multi-faith context.



Kachusey Silander, a Brown grant recipient, makes a presentation at a workshop at General Synod in June 2015.

Another third of the grant gathered a dozen clergy who were new to Hawai'i or new to ministry for a day-long orientation in August at the Conference

Office. This was a chance to discuss both ministry issues in general and those that are unique to Hawai'i. Participants valued sharing their questions and issues, in particular, one person said, "the challenges of isolation, cultural differences, and values of Hawaiian culture."

The final third assisted the Tri-Isle Association in its continuing education program, Equipping Tomorrow's Church Leaders. Through the grant, ministers and laypersons were able to attend courses such as Boundary Training; History of Christianity, UCC, and the Pacific World; and Migration Stories in the Bible.

Hawai'i seminarians have also benefited from the Brown Endowment, including, most recently, Kachusey Silander, member of Shechem Church and student at Vancouver School of Theology, who received a scholarship to attend General Synod this last summer with over thirty other UCC seminarians.

The Brown Endowment is administered by United Church Funds, and awards are made in three categories: members in discernment, continuing education, and seminarians from international partner churches. Grants range from \$2,000 to \$10,000, and UCC-related organizations or groups of five or more members may apply.

Applications for the next funding cycle will be made available on December 15, 2015. Visit www.ucc.org/ministry_education_scholarships for more information and guidelines.

resource List

Kalaupapa Sunday

On the fourth Sunday of every January, churches are invited to commemorate the more than eight thousand people diagnosed with Hansen's disease who were exiled to Moloka'i's remote Kalaupapa peninsula beginning in January 1886.



Borne out of a resolution at the 191st 'Aha Pae'aina, this day of remembrance is designated as Kalaupapa Sunday. Resources for observing Kalaupapa Sunday, including the 'Aha Pae'aina resolution, are available on the Hawai'i Conference website (www.hcucc.org).

The suggested date for observing Kalaupapa Sunday is January 24, 2016, though churches may honor the patients of Kalaupapa and their families any Sunday in the year.

Henry Opukaha'ia Scholarship

Show your church's love this Valentine's Day by contributing to the Henry Opukaha'ia Scholarship Fund.



Named after the young Hawaiian credited with inspiring the Sandwich Islands mission that brought Christianity to Hawai'i in the nineteenth century, Henry Opukaha'ia Scholarships are available to candidates for ministry attending an accredited seminary and clergy pursuing continuing education.

Since 2004, ninety-five recipients (including five this past fiscal year) have been awarded a total of \$85,146. Forty-one have received seminary scholarships, and fifty-four have attended continuing education workshops and clergy retreats with money received from this scholarship.

Each year churches are invited to receive the offering on the Sunday closest to the anniversary of Henry Opukaha'ia's death, which this year falls on February 14. Churches may also choose to collect the offering on another date.

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

Missouri Pastor to Lead UCC Justice and Witness

Traci Blackmon of Florissant, Missouri, was named acting executive of Justice and Witness Ministries by the United Church of Christ Board. The Rev. Blackmon was a registered nurse for over 25 years before being ordained by the African Methodist Episcopal Church and later becoming Pastor of Christ the King UCC, the first woman pastor in the church's 156-year history.



Blackmon became nationally recognized as a prominent voice for social change when 18 year old Michael Brown was fatally shot six times by a white police officer in Ferguson, just miles from her church. She immediately got involved in organizing the Black Lives Matter movement, effectively assisting and collaborating with the people in the community working for justice.

Blackmon, who has three children, Kortni, Harold II, and Tyler, will assume her new role on January 1, 2016, spending two weeks a month in Cleveland and two weeks in Missouri.

UCC and United Church Canada Celebrate Full Communion



On October 17, leaders of the governing bodies of the United Church of Christ and the United Church of Canada signed and approved a full communion agreement.

The official communion document was signed by Ms. Dale Bonds, Chair of the United Church of Christ Board, and the Rt. Rev. Jordan Cantwell, Moderator of the United Church of Canada.

With full communion, both churches recognize each others' sacraments and ordained ministers. This includes granting ministers the privilege to be called by congregations of either denomination. Both denominations have common ecumenical partners and hold similar views on social issues. This is the UCC's fourth full communion agreement.

Conversation toward full communion began in April 2012, when the UCC made a visit to United Church of Canada offices in Toronto. After a year of discussion, six representatives from each church brought a common document for approval at their national conventions. The Thirtieth General Synod of the UCC unanimously approved that document on June 29.

Nearly four hundred attended worship and celebrated the signing at St. Andrew's United Church in Niagara Falls, Ontario. At the conclusion, Cantwell declared that it was "time to go from here and put these commitments and this agreement into action."

UCC Leader Outlines Initiatives to Build Innovation, Ingenuity

Today the narrative shifts, proclaimed John Dorhauer, UCC General Minister and President. Today the United Church of Christ focuses on what the Holy Spirit envisions for its future.

Dorhauer shared that vision with members of the UCC Board during its October meeting, imploring them to believe, hope and expect—just as he does—that the denomination's best days are ahead.

In his first remarks to the Board since his election at General Synod 2015, Dorhauer introduced five initiatives he plans to undertake as ninety-day goals:



1. Stillspeaking 2.0

A decade ago, the UCC launched the "God is Still Speaking" identity campaign. This time, rather than investing in new TV commercials, Dorhauer envisions a "toolkit" for local churches to create and customize banners and social media graphics.

2. Year-Long Media Campaign

The denominational office will create a public event twelve times a year (once per month) in which its voice will be heard. "We must say things that not only matter, but have the potential to shape the world as we know it," said Dorhauer.

3. Deepen Dialogue with Local Churches

Thirty national staff will make a phone call each day to a local church, asking what they are doing that makes them proud to be part of that church. "We want to create an ethos where every church knows that they matter," Dorhauer said.

4. Dialogue on White Privilege

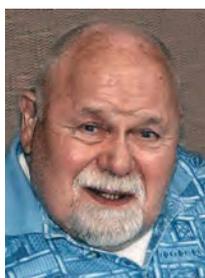
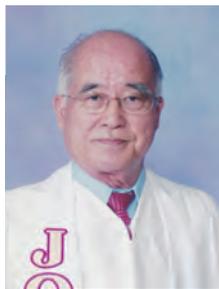
In ongoing conversations on race, Dorhauer is calling the church to dialogue on white privilege—particularly white male privilege. The national setting will develop curricula that will help covenanted settings open conversation on the effects of white privilege on the church.

5. Strategic Planning

The Board and covenanted partners will undertake a two-phase strategic planning process. The first phase will examine the next ten years, placing an emphasis on people under age 40. The second phase will explore ways the church can stay relevant in ten years without sacrificing the UCC's identity and mission.

In Memory of Faithful Servants

Akira Shimizu died October 4 at the age of 88. He was ordained in 1955 and served as Japanese language minister of Waipahu UCC and Nu'uano Congregational Church, in addition to churches in Japan. Memorial service was held at Central Union Church on October 7.



Edwin Zuern died October 14 at the age of 82, in Bismarck, North Dakota. He was a licensed minister who served in Hawai'i as interim minister at Kapa'a United Church of Christ and Makawao Union Church.

Harvey Rhinelander, retired minister of Kahikuonalani United Church of Christ, died November 9 at the age of 72 in Henrietta, Texas. Memorial service was held at his home on November 13, and graveside service on November 15.



William "Uncle Billy" Paris, Jr., former licensed minister of Lanakila Congregational Church, died November 14 at the age of 92. Memorial service was held at his residence on November 29, followed by interment of ashes at Lanakila Church.

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'uano Ave., Honolulu, HI 96817.



Highlights from the Website

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

Pastoral Changes

Jeff Crews resigned as Pastor of Waiola Church in Lahaina in order to care for family in Minnesota. His last Sunday was October 25.

Edward "Ted" Robinson ended his interim ministry at Waiokeola Congregational Church. His last Sunday was October 25.

Gloria Imamura resigned as Associate Minister of Central Union Church after five years of ministry there. Her last Sunday was November 1.

Wallace Ryan Kuroiwa began as Interim Pastor of Iao United Church of Christ on November 15.

Recognition Services

The Hawai'i Island Association held a recognition service for **Charles Mahina Kaupiko** and **Melveen Kaupiko** as licensed ministers of Hau'oli Kamana'o Church on Saturday, October 17.

The O'ahu Association held a recognition service for **Robert Komet** as licensed minister of Shechem Church on Sunday, November 8.

(Churches Can Help Families, continued from page 3)

to 'kill' him! The assumption was that 'the kids were going to take care of me,' so there were no arrangements for long-term care."

Even if families have not planned ahead, it is imperative when serious illness strikes that there be conversations among the patient, family and doctor, said Daniel. That's because the priorities of patients are not necessarily the priorities of the healthcare system, which tends to focus primarily on tests, treatments and prolonging life.

Jeannette said that churches can and should help start the important discussion about end-of-life care and advance planning—a point that was affirmed by several ministers at the clergy gathering. She and volunteers at Kōkua Mau can visit congregations and provide resources needed to hold these conversations.

"My congregation has plenty of eighty and ninety year olds, and trying to have those conversations is like walking into a vacuum," said Jayne Ryan Kuroiwa, Pastor of Windward UCC. "There is little understanding of what options are available."

For more information or to request a speaker to visit your church, visit www.kokuamau.org or email jkoijane@kokuamau.org.



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December 2015

Around the Conference

Conference Calendar of Events

December 12	AHEC Board of Directors
December 24-25	Christmas Holiday (Office Closed)
December 31- January 1	New Years Holiday (Office Closed)
January 18	Martin Luther King, Jr., Day (Office Closed)
January 30	Tri-Isle 'Aha Makua
February 6	Conference Council and Foundation Trustees
February 15	President's Day (Office Closed)
February 27	Church Leaders Event

Keep Christ in Christmas

“Put Christ back into Christmas” or “Jesus is the reason for the season” are common sayings this time of year. Here are some ideas to live these out.

- Go to church, light Advent candles, hear the birth story.
- Read the pre-birth stories where God promises justice and compassion to a hurting world.
- Study John 1:1-18 and consider: How is Jesus the light of the world? How can you share that light?
- Commit to doing something kind and compassionate every month of the new year, not just in December!
- Think about “what” is coming at Christmas: What does Jesus’ coming and presence mean for us and our world?
- Give simple gifts rather than lavish ones, and add a note explaining why the gift made you think of them.
- Preserve the earth and recycle Christmas cards: Take pictures from previous cards and glue onto cardstock or construction paper.