

# **THE CONNECTION**

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## ***From the Pastor's Desk...***

This month I will be preaching on the idea of heaven (August 21<sup>st</sup>). I have been asked to do this by one of the congregants, so I have been researching as much as I can without, you know, actually going for an official visit (ha-ha). So many questions come up when reviewing the topic. Perhaps you have had similar questions?

Do non-Christian types get to go to heaven? Will I recognize my parents? Will there be dinosaurs there? What about my dog, since Revelations says that no dogs will be there? What will my own body look like? Will I have wings? Will I have gray hair? How old will I be when I am there? Can I return to earth to visit? Can I see hell from heaven? How many angels really can dance on the head of a needle?

All of these questions relate back to the one essential question: What happens when I stop breathing, my heart stops beating, and my brain finally shuts down for good? This is an extremely important question as it defines very much our faith in Christ. We believe that although we die, yet may we live through Christ. We believe that Christ has conquered death and that the life eternal actually begins at that very moment when we accept in our own hearts life in Christ.

Recently I was told after a treadmill test on my heart that the ol' ticker was healthy enough to let me live to be a hundred. Is that all? I want the eternal life in heaven. Just living to be one hundred is, well, almost anticlimactic. To this point I realized that my spiritual health matters just as much as my cardio health.



One of my fears of the afterlife is that I might get to heaven only to discover that there might not be enough to do there. I like keeping active. What will I be doing in heaven for the rest of eternity that could be so engaging? I think the answer to this lies in God's great commandment to us to "love." Loving is not a task or a chore. It is a state of being in deepest connection. It is a state of complete sacrifice and humility. It is exhilarating. We are to be in love for eternity.

I know that most pastors shy away from talking about heaven. The reason for this is that we cannot know for sure. However, I am also aware that our Christian belief in heaven truly separates us from other faiths in a unique way. We bear the burdens of this world because we await our joy in meeting Jesus in heaven. In essence we already belong to our heavenly King even though we are still bound to this earthly realm for the time being. This understanding has given people hope in their lives for millennia even in the darkest of times. Think how different your understanding of life would be if you did not have hope for one day being with God in heaven. It is hard to imagine such a hopeless existence.

So, I am looking forward to speaking more about this with you soon. Again, I thank you for your sermon suggestions.

*Aloha ke Akua, Pastor Olaf*

*The mission of the Waimea United Church of Christ is to provide, through Jesus Christ, the means by which people grow spiritually, thereby preparing and empowering them to witness to God's love, to identify the needs of the community, and to minister to them.*

**Scripture & Sermon Titles  
August 2011**

Aug. 7<sup>th</sup> John 21:1-14  
"Breakfast at Eternities"  
Aug. 14<sup>th</sup> John 21:15-25  
"Feed Sheep"  
Aug. 21<sup>st</sup> 1 John 5:1-5  
"What Heaven is Like"  
Aug. 28<sup>th</sup> Ezra 3:1-10; 7:9-10  
"Worship Ruined"  
Sept. 4<sup>th</sup> Nehemiah 13:14-22  
"Rebuild"

Starting in August, we will be looking into the lives of the minor prophets of the Bible right up to Malachi's foretelling of the coming of the Messiah! From that launching point we can then jump into Advent in the Fall, realizing how Christ's coming had been foretold for centuries.

The Tuesday morning Bible Study Group meets in Baird Hall at 9 a.m. This group studies the upcoming Sunday's scripture and sermon topic and gives input for the sermon. All are welcome to share in the lively discussion and prayer.

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**EVENING BIBLE STUDY**

The Evening Bible Study and fellowship meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays at 6 pm. We are studying the book of Acts. Listen to announcements for the location each time.

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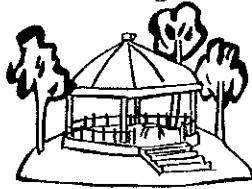
**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE BOOK CLUB WILL BE ON AUGUST 21, 2011, AT 3 PM, AND WILL BE HOSTED BY HELEN H-P. WE WILL DISCUSS THE BOOK "BATTLE HYMN OF THE TIGER MOTHER" BY AMY CHUA. EVERYONE IS WELCOME.**

**CHURCH COUNCIL NOTES**

Here is a summary of the July Church Council meeting:

- Council approved Pastor Olaf applying for a Richard Wong Endowment Trust grant in the amount of \$1,000.00 to purchase a new laptop.
- Outdoor Worship service is scheduled for August 28 at Lucy Wright Park. The Marshallese congregation will be joining WUCC, the Hanapepe Hawaiian UCC is interested in attending as well, and there may be a deputation of about forty-five Kamehameha students in town that weekend who may also be participating. Everyone is encouraged to bring larger amounts of food for the polluck.
- Pastor suggested that WUCC extend a gesture of appreciation to the staff at KVMH for their work in the community. Pastor will contact Bella or Paige at KVMH to arrange for some kind of 'coffee hour,' refreshments can be provided by church volunteers or funds from the Missions committee can be utilized. Teri recommended that the event be held by September before people get busy with fall and winter events.
- Pastor is looking ahead to the annual Waimea Lighted Christmas parade; he is open to ideas for a WUCC entry. He suggested a rooster motif but is open to all ideas.
- The council approved by consensus to open the sanctuary as a venue for Hawaiian musicians to perform on Feb. 21, 2012 as part of the Waimea Town Celebration.
- Pastor shared that a new governance model was approved at the National Synod. The operations at national are being streamlined to one large UCC Board of Directors from the previous five separate boards. This was done to save time and money. More information is available at [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)
- Galvanized trashcans will be purchased for the church grounds. They will need to be labeled as 'green waste' and 'non-green waste' and will be secured around the campus. Non-green trash will have to be taken to the parsonage for curbside pick up.
- James will designate a compost area and ask Steven Duarte to empty cemetery trash cans with green waste into that designated area.
- The Finance Committee will manage the Church accounting until a new Treasurer is elected next year.
- Helen shared some fund-raising ideas: sale of personalized coffee mugs with members' photographs on them, sale of calendars, sale of mugs with photographs of WUCC on them for visitors who tour the church grounds. She asked for other ideas for the Stewardship committee to consider. Margaret suggested starter plants since David Somers donated many seed trays. Teri suggested a craft session for members to make crafts as gifts.
- The deacons, or a designated deacon, will be a point of contact for Pastor to inform when a church member needs encouragement for illness, misfortune, or loss of loved one. Deacons will send a card, pay a visit, or extend caring in behalf of the church family.
- Margaret reported that the Food Pantry committee has been working to comply with USDA regulations regarding food storage and the amount of food held in reserve.
- Lissa will be meeting with Helen, Jackie, and Cinthy later in July to start planning for the upcoming start of Sunday School. Lessons will continue with the same curriculum that was used this past year. Sunday School will start on Sunday, September 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Helen shared that there are a number of KAUCC youth who want to be actively engaged in church activity and want to participate in youth events. She said the KAUCC is working towards providing more support for these youth. If people cannot be physically involved they can provide financial support so youth can attend camps and other events.

**OUTDOOR WORSHIP IN THE PARK  
SUNDAY, AUGUST 28<sup>TH</sup>, 10 A.M.  
LUCY WRIGHT PARK, WAIMEA  
Potluck and Bingo to Follow**



*Please bring a dish to share. Bring a little extra as we are anticipating guests from other churches as well.*

Bring your donations for bingo prizes to Baird Hall and let Kathy or Helen know. Mahalo.

*GARDEN WORKDAY: SATURDAY, AUGUST 20<sup>TH</sup>. COME EARLY TO BEAT THE HEAT.*

**CHURCH CLEANING FUND:** If you would like to help pay for the cleaning of Baird Hall and the Sanctuary, you can donate to the Cleaning Fund. If you are able to help clean, please sign up in the Narthex.

The National Listening Campaign on Women's Ministries in the United Church of Christ is conducting a survey from July 1 to September 16 to gather information that will assist in shaping the future of women's ministries in the UCC. The Campaign seeks input from women of all ages (high school through 90+) about what matters to them in their lives and faith experiences. Input is also sought from pastors and other church leaders, men and women, who have or want to have activities designed especially for women in their congregations. Log on to [coconutwireless@hcucc.org](mailto:coconutwireless@hcucc.org) to take the survey.

Also on the [coconutwireless@hcucc.org](mailto:coconutwireless@hcucc.org) website: videos from the General Synod meeting in Florida.



**Cleaning out your closets?** Remember to donate stuff as Bingo prizes for the Outdoor Worship service, or to the Rummage Sale. Please **DO NOT** take donations for the Rummage to the White Church. Bring them to the Rummage Sale rooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month.

**WANT TO ENJOY SOME COOL MOUNTAIN AIR?**  
Join us for a workday at the Waimeke cabins in Kokee on Saturday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, starting at 9 a.m. Bring cleaning and fixing tools and something to share at lunch. Talk to Teri or Helen if you want to carpool.



*The Church's Ministries*

**Food Pantry:**  
*Distribution-Wed., August 23<sup>d</sup>*  
**Rummage Sale: Saturday,**  
*August 13<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 - 11:30 a.m.*  
**Quilting Group:**  
*Sunday, August 7<sup>th</sup>*  
**Church Council Meeting:**  
*Sunday, August 14<sup>th</sup>*  
**Finance Committee:**  
*Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup>*  
**August Lay Reader:**  
*Gracelleanor Baird*  
**August Deacon:**  
*Kimberly H-P*



**Our Prayers**

*For the Ueno family (passing of Sheila), the Douglas family (passing of Elmo); the Kamai family (passing of Grace's daughter, Kawai); Nora (passing of her brother, Loddy); Lois Somers (arm injury), Virginia Aguilar (knee surgery); Naoko Ogata (hip injury); Angela Yokotake (broken arm), Lynn, Susie Somers' sister; Robbie (Nora's son-in-law); Beth Hanashiro, Jean Thompson, Wayne (Lyndel Erdmann's brother), Satoe Oyama, Nobue, Kikui, Mary Watanabe, Ruth Cassel, Gladys Okada, Catherine Wilson, Nancy Jones, Jane Masukawa, Gayle Mizukami, Sue Metivier, Jim Kimoto, Nelson Keller, Frank Watanabe, our graduates, the youth in Waimea High School, Nora Vidinha, Michael, Lance; Michael Nizo, Veronica Botelho, Sosei Chinen, Selden Burtch, Verna Kauahi, Desiree Kamai-Santos, our local, state and national leaders and our troops overseas.*

*The Dentist's Hymn: Crown Him with Many Crowns...The Politician's Hymn: Standing on the Promises...The Baker's Hymn: When the Roll is Called UP Yonder...The Hematologist's Hymn: Are You Washed in the Blood?... The Waiter's Hymn: Fill My Cup, Lord*

## PACIFIC VOYAGERS

For the Past two Sundays I have asked travel mercies for the crew of the six voyaging canoes on their way from Hanalei to San Francisco. My specific reason for mentioning this group each Sunday is the fact that Michelle, my son Chris' wife, is one of the crew on one of the canoes. However, as I follow them day-by-day via the Internet I find there is more than just my own family interest involved. Each day a "blog," many pictures and comments by crewmembers appears on this website. You'd be surprised at the marvelous things I've learned from these daily contacts. I strongly suggest that you give it a "look-see," using the website [www.pacificvoyagers.org](http://www.pacificvoyagers.org).

Let me quote from one of the initial blogs, written by one of the canoe captains: *"Te Mana o Te Moana. We have chosen this name for our voyage, which translates as 'The Spirit of the Sea,' to contribute the wisdom of the Polynesian ancestors who loved and respected the seas. Several thousand years ago the Polynesian ancestors traveled the Pacific on great voyaging canoes...using only the stars, the ocean, and the surrounding wildlife to navigate and lived closely connected to the sea. In crossing the Pacific from (New Zealand to California via Hawaii) we aim to sail in the ancestors' wake and learn from their wisdom. We want to teach young people about this old bond with the sea."*

You can tell from this that they are not just a group of wildly courageous men and women out for an adventure. They are risking their life to show others around the world that it is possible to live together, work together and learn together from the past and to contribute positively to the future.

*-Graceleanor Baird*

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