A Monthly Newsletter of ‘Īao United Church of Christ

2371 W. Vineyard Street, Wailuku | (808) 244-7353 | Email: office@iaoucc.org **August 2026**

Kahu Kalani’s Konnections

I have always appreciated this time of year. On the first day of school, I looked forward to watching students arrive—some bright-eyed and ready to learn, others still carrying the signs of an early morning with sleep-tousled hair. They greeted one another warmly, compared schedules, and gradually made their way to their first classes.

I saw this season as a brand-new notebook, its blank pages ready to be filled with lessons yet to be learned. Each keiki and ‘ōpio stood at the beginning of a fresh start, with untold possibilities waiting ahead. The lessons of the past would become a foundation for what was to come. New subjects would open new worlds and ideas, while challenges would test each student’s ability to grow, persevere, and master the material. Even failures would become part of the learning journey, teaching each one how to rise again and ho‘omau—to keep moving forward.

This can also be our attitude toward life: to recognize the blessing of a fresh start each morning. Lamentations 3:22–23 reminds us that Ke Akua’s aloha and mercy are renewed every day.

> *22 Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.*
> *23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*

Psalm 118:24 also reminds us that the Creator God breathes life into each new day. So let us step forward with hope, gratitude, and expectation.

> *“This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”*

A new day will be dawning soon for ‘Īao UCC as the church profile has been completed and we’ll start receiving applications for the settled pastor position. Mahalo to the pastoral selection committee for their faithfulness and hard work. We look forward with anticipation to see who God has already selected for our church.

Let each new day remind us of God’s faithfulness. Pause to give thanks, then set your heart and hands toward doing something new and good that day. May God give you the inspiration, strength, and energy to do so.

In this with you,
Kahu Kalani

August 3: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost (communion)
Title: *More than Enough*
Preacher: Rev. Heather Mueller
Scripture: Matthew 14:13-21
Greeter: Gerald Montano
Readers: Joyleen Phillip and Anela Awai-Stewart
Musician: Ruth Murata
Aloha Hour: Johannes ‘Ohana

August 9: Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost
Title: *A Tale of Two Brothers and Still Family*
Preacher: The Rev. John Hau‘oli Tomoso
Scripture: Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28
Greeter: Gerald Montano
Readers: Joyleen Phillip and Anela Awai-Stewart
Musician: Ruth Murata
Aloha Hour: Yoruw ‘Ohana

August 16: Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost
Title: *Set Aside for Better*
Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong
Scripture: Genesis 45:1-15
Greeter: Gerald Montano
Readers: Joyleen Phillip and Anela Awai-Stewart
Musician: Dale Schwarz and Anne Barclay Rovner
Aloha Hour: Cheryl Matsui and Mike Petersen

August 23: Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Title: *A Mother’s Love*
Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong
Scripture: Exodus 1:8-2:10
Greeter: Gerald Montano
Readers: Joyleen Phillip and Anela Awai-Stewart
Musician: Christophe Jovan
Aloha Hour: Lili Vehikite and Jackie Murai

August 30: Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Youth Sunday
Title: *Live Your Best Love*
Preacher: Kahu Kalani Wong
Scripture: Romans 12:9-21
Greeter: Gerald Montano
Readers: Joyleen Phillip and Anela Awai-Stewart
Musician: Ruth Murata
Aloha Hour: Kosraen Etawi

If you are able to host a future Aloha Hour, please sign up on the sheet in the back of the church, or let Jackie or Carolyn know.

Moderator’s Mana‘o

By Suzette Robinson, co-moderator

The Stewardship campaign, which is a tool to help our church thrive through the time and talents of our congregation, is also an opportunity to shine a light on the gifts God has given us. In Matthew 5:16 (CEV), Jesus says, “Make your light shine so that others will see the good that you do and will praise our Father in heaven.” Fortunately for our church, we have many people who use their gifts from God to carry out our mission, which states “We are a people of God, living and sharing the love of Christ and reflecting that love in words and actions.” This month’s moderator’s message focuses on the members of the church’s executive council, members who give of their time and talents and in doing, glorifies God.

- Shannon Ribao, the co-moderator, has the gift of a welcoming personality. She loves listening to different perspectives and creating a safe space where people are able to express their ideas and feelings without judgement. She has the gift to bring people together for a common cause. With her warm personality, she is an excellent representative of the church.

- Suzette Robinson, the co-moderator, comes with certain skills which help with the completion of projects. She is organized and persistent. She likes order and clarity. When taking on a task, she relies on a clear goal and timeline. Without those two elements, she has difficulty participating and her “weed” of impatience shows itself. She is also persistent and is not afraid to use her resources to ensure actions are taken and goals are met.

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- Cynthia Snell, the vice moderator, has the ability to think three dimensionally, allowing her the skill to become a successful architect. Cynthia's contribution to the church's physical improvements is seen in her tireless work to ensure the success of the building and grounds projects, e.g., sidewalk. Her second gift is her desire to join groups; hence her willingness to take on the vice moderator's position and work on projects such as the overhauling of the church's bylaws. Without her computer skills and her willingness to sit for hours, haggling over terms and language, that project would still be lingering.

- Bryn Turner, the treasurer, has been gifted with an analytical mind, which provides proficiency with financial matters and computer tools. Both skills are manifested in the succinct monthly financial reports and the weekly running of the audio/visual equipment on Sundays. The church leaders cannot make sound financial decisions unless there is a clear understanding of the financial health of the church. Byrn provides that. Next, the people who cannot attend church in person are still able to hear God's message and feel part of the church's family by listening to the service via technology. In between these two major tasks, Byrn is also generous in helping people with their computer questions and problems, something we all appreciate.

- Linda Johannes, the secretary, comes with the gift of wanting to "give back to the church." Taking accurate council notes can be a challenge, especially when there is a topic with differing points of view. However, she takes notes then listens to the audio tape to ensure accuracy. Sometimes even the tapes do not provide the kind of information or clarity she seeks,

- Jackie Murai, the financial secretary, has taken multiple roles at our church. Her desire to contribute to the church is based on her gratitude for God's love which has enriched and blessed her life. This feeling of thanksgiving has provided stability for the church as it has gone through a number of challenges. Jackie also has the gift of taking on large tasks and to work cooperatively with people no matter how busy she might be. She has the ability to analyze a situation and is not afraid to take appropriate actions. Thanks to her gifts, the church has a person who has both the historical knowledge and the present-day insights to help the church function effectively.

- Gail Ideue, the assistant financial secretary, has also taken on many roles at our church. Presently, she is the assistant financial secretary, but she has also been the moderator and financial secretary. Gail believes God gave her the gift of work experience. As her husband's office manager, she learned to handle the financial complexities of running a business from check writing to payroll distribution. These are talents that she now uses for our church. Gail also possesses the gift of optimism. She sees hope in all situations.

Many others serve faithfully behind the scenes. Food Bank volunteers help ensure that community members facing food insecurity have access to weekly groceries. Members serving through our church's seven committees also work diligently to meet the needs of both our congregation and the wider community. Through these acts of volunteerism, our church continues to live out its mission in meaningful ways. What gifts has God given you to share?

***"Make your light shine so that others will see the good that you do and will praise our Father in heaven."*- Matthew 5:16**

Buildings and Grounds

Thanks to a huge donation of topsoil from TJ Gomes Trucking, we were able to finish the sidewalk project by landscaping both sides of the walkway, as well as fill in chicken holes and low spots around our grounds. We appreciate all those who came out to wheelbarrow the dirt and distribute it, covering up the exposed edges of the sidewalk, and ensuring a gentle slope to allow water to flow downhill. Next up are the reroofing of Endo Hall and the sanctuary which will require considerable unbudgeted funds. Please keep an eye out for the announcements of the capital campaign program to pay for this.

ʻĪao Preschool

July marked the end of the 2025-2026 school year. We celebrated with our butterfly group and their ʻohana as they fluttered off to "big school." We look with excitement for the new keiki who will join us on August 3. Mahalo to our hard-working staff who give so much of their energy to helping our keiki grow in body, mind, and spirit.

A new mural is being painted to showcase Hawaiʻi's native birds. Mahalo to Noble Richardson, an art teacher at Wailuku Elementary and UHMC. He and his students from UHMC helped create a beautiful masterpiece. Stop by sometime o see the completed mural.

Learning Community

August is bringing a few not so well-known people of the Bible to our keiki. Our story line is entitled "Bible Friendship Files" where we will meet Shiphrah and Puah from Exodus 1:15:21 where it tells of brave friends who protect each other. Friends that told the truth is found in 2 Samuel 12:1-14 through Nathan and David. Who doesn't love Mary and Martha and how they show their different strengths in

Luke 10:38-43 and then the women who traveled with Jesus: Mary Magdalene, Joanna & Susanna when we look Luke 8:1-3.

A special Sunday School invitation will go out to all the Keiki reminding them the ***Sunday School New Year will begin on Sunday September 6***. This invite will also be shared with the preschool families.

Interested in being baptized, confirmed, and/or joining ʻĪao UCC as a member? Let Kahu Kalani know. Classes will begin in September.

The Learning Community would like you to start praying about where your time and talent will be focused in 2027. Please consider the learning community.

The Learning Community will not meet in August. The next meeting will be held September 6 after worship service in Endo Hall.

Stewarding Community

We are grateful for a church friend's offer to provide a home-cooked meal for anyone in need. It may be due to illness or certain life events that can be a challenge.

The second Tuesday of each month is the planned visitation for members who cannot attend church. Please contact the church office or Jane Tesoro, Stewarding Chair, if interested in going along or have someone who could use a friendly visit.

Here's a look ahead: these events are scheduled for the **September 13** worship service: Keiro no Hi and the Stewarding Campaign kickoff. It will include Communion, too.

- Keiro no Hi (Respect for the Elderly) will recognize honorees who reached 80 this year. More details to follow.
- The 2026 - 27 Stewarding Campaign's theme: "***There Our Hearts Will Be"*** will begin with the Time & Talent survey. We hope you will be encouraged to participate in our church's communities and missions.
- **Luncheon to follow:** After worship on September 13, please join us in Kanda Hall for lunch. The Stewarding Community will provide the main dish; side dishes and desserts are welcome.

A Glimpse at our Giving

Mahalo for your generous donations which is keeping us ahead of our expenses. We anticipate a large insurance bill to be paid out soon, which will deplete a lot of the built up overage.

ʻĪao United Church of Christ Summary Financial Information			
	May 2026	**June 2026**	**Year to Date**
Church Income	$17,937	$13,794	$125,032
Church Expenses	-$5,275	-$14,646	-$57,973
Income over (under) expenses	$12,662	-$852	$67,059

Feeding our Families

For many teens, summer mornings are a time to sleep in and relax. Even so, several youth and college students chose to spend their Monday mornings serving at the **Food Pantry**.

When asked what motivated them to get out of bed, they shared a simple answer: it felt good to help the community. They saw firsthand the difference their time could make as they packed bags of vegetables, helped distribute food boxes, and offered encouragement to our clients.

Mahalo to everyone who helped this summer. As school begins, we will need more hands to continue this important ministry. Please join us as you are able—and be sure to stay for lunch.

Worshipping Community

We say aloha to July as it comes to a close and reflect on an eventful month at ʻĪao UCC. One of the highlights has been the completion of the sidewalk construction leading down to Endo Hall. This project has made our campus safer for everyone, and we extend our gratitude to the Building and Grounds team for their hard work and dedication.

The worshipping community is also thankful for the July worship team, including Kahu Kalani, Gail Ideue, Makelyn Johannes, Carlyn Obet, and our reliable substitutes, Jane Tesoro and Cynthia Snell. We are truly blessed to have such committed individuals who are willing to step up whenever needed.

As August arrives and the summer heat continues, things are heating up at ʻĪao UCC as well. This month begins with Rev. Heather Mueller leading worship on August 2, followed by the Rev. John Hauʻoli Tomoso on August 9. For the remainder of August, Kahu Kalani Wong will be guiding our worship services, supported by the August Worship team: Gerald Montano, Joyleen Phillip, and Anela Awai Stewart.

The Rev. Heather Mueller

We thank Ruth Murata for accompanying us in recent weeks. She will play for our worship services the first two Sundays in August before moving on to Keawalaʻi Congregational Church. We appreciate her dedication and wish her well as she continues to share her music

August excitement also includes the start of a new school year. we wish all our keiki success and support as they embark on new learning adventures

The Rev. John Hauʻoli Tomoso

Wishing you all a wonderful month ahead—see you in church on Sundays at 10:00 AM!

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." – Matthew 18:20

All in the ‘Ohana

Dining with the Dames

July ladies lunch bunch included a wonderful welcome to two first timers. The regular group, which includes Jan Saiki. June Uyetake, Heidi Israel, Lynette Shiroma, Dawna Krueger, Joy Yamaoka welcomed Bonnie Ichimura and Jeanne Abe. This is such a great opportunity to share with each other so much more than our Sunday morning greetings. Ladies’ Lunch meets the first Friday of the month at 11:30ish until 1:30ish. Or set your own convenient time.

David Murata- A Life of Advocacy and Service

David Murata passed away peacefully on Sunday, July 19. He will be remembered as a faithful advocate for people too often living on the margins. Through his leadership at Ka Lima O Maui, he helped provide job training and employment opportunities for adults with disabilities, affirming their dignity and reminding others that everyone has gifts to contribute.

David also had a deep heart for immigrants and the Micronesian communities in Hawai‘i. He helped begin the Maui Marshallese Ministry, the Chuukese Church, the Pohnpeian Church, and Kosraean Etawi here at ‘Īao UCC. Beyond church starts, he advocated for Micronesian communities at the Association and Conference levels and supported families who were new to the islands.

In one example of his care, David met a family who had recently immigrated to Maui from Laos. He helped them find a home and supported the children in their schooling. Although the father had been a doctor in Laos, he was only able to work as a nurse in the United States. David encouraged the children to study hard and make the most of the opportunities before them. Today, the daughter is a doctor on the mainland, and the son is a leader in the technology industry, often lecturing around the nation.

David and Grace also owned a Christmas tree farm. One year, David invited the youth to help with the harvest—cutting, bagging, and tagging trees. By the end of the day, everyone was covered in pine needles and sap. In gratitude for their hard work, David and Grace made a generous donation to the youth group.

David cared deeply about the future of our church. He worked earnestly to begin an endowment program and invited members to consider designating a portion of their estate to support the church’s ministry. He created flyers and spoke passionately about this vision. In his memory, you may wish to consider including the church in your own estate planning.

Mahalo, David, for your steadfast aloha for God and God’s people.

Celebration of Life: Saturday, August 29, at ‘Īao UCC. Visitation begins at 9:00 a.m., with the service starting at 10:00 a.m.

August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Happy Birthday this Month to: 1- Pastor Shrew, 7-Daniel Hadley, 8-Branda Jim, 9- Mary-Lynn Latu, 12-Lauren Akitake, 13-Joshlynna Furgo, Scott Akitake-Hill, 18-Mavrick Falan, 21-Jolyn Yinmed, 27-Craig Bode, 31- Jeviohn Yoruw, Sanoe Awai						**1** 7-8p AA K
2 10th Sunday after Pentecost 10a Worship Communion 11:15 Learning E 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S	**3** IPS 2026-27 School Year Begins 9a-2p Food Pantry K 6:30-9:30p AA K	**4** 5-6:30 Etawi K 5:30-7:30 Al Anon District K	**5** 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui S	**6** 9:30 IPS Chapel S	**7** 11:30a Ladies Lunch Bunch L 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship S	**8** 7-8p AA K
9 11th Sunday after Pentecost 10a Worship 11:15 Worshipping Comm. K 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S	**10** 9a-2p Food Pantry K 6:30-9:30p AA K	**11** 12:45p Visitation	**12** 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui S	**13** 9:30 IPS Chapel S	**14** 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship S	**15** 9 am B & G E 7-8p AA K
16 12th Sunday after Pentecost 10a Worship 11:15 Stewarding K 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S	**17** 9a-2p Food Pantry K 6:30-9:30p AA K	**18**	**19** 'Īao Pepa/Council Reports Due 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui S	**20** 9:30 IPS Chapel S	**21** HAWAII STATEHOOD DAY 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship S	**22** 8a Workday 7-8p AA K
23 13th Sunday after Pentecost 10a Worship 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S	**24** 9a-2p Food Pantry K 6:30-9:30p AA K	**25**	**26** 5:45 Council Z 7p-8p 'Ukulele Hui S	**27** 9:30 IPS Chapel S	**28** 6p-7p Kosrae Women's Fellowship S	**29** 7-8p AA K
30 14th Sunday after Pentecost 10a Worship 3p-6p Kosrae/Etawi S	**31** 9a-2p Food Pantry K 6:30-9:30p AA K					**Location Key:** S- Sanctuary K- Kanda Hall E- Endo Hall L- Lanai 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**
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or by appointment
Food Pantry Monday 11a-2p

Email: office@iaoucc.org
Website: iaoucc.org
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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
Musicians for August — Ruth Murata, Dale Schwarz, Ann Barclay Rovner, and Christophe Javon
Newsletter Editor — Kalani Wong
ʻĪao Preschool Director — Flerida Iniba

You are always welcome at ʻĪao UCC.

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