



April 27, 2008, Sixth Sunday of Easter

New in the Spirit:

Prayers for Pacific Island and Asian American Sunday

***T**his worship service is conceived with sensitivity toward the Pacific Island Asian American (PAAM) Sunday being celebrated on this day in congregations of the United Church of Christ. It is worthy of our church to honor the many gifts brought to our community through the participation, service and faithfulness of the peoples who live in the lands touched by the Pacific Ocean, more than half the world's population. This worship format is influenced by the author's participation in three different PAAM churches of San Diego and in two of the Hawaiian islands. In the Communion Prayer, the Hawaiian term "Ohana" is employed. "Ohana" denotes a close friendship/relationship. Its literal meaning is "family" but it can also mean an extended family that can include those not blood related.*

Call to Worship

One: Hallelujah! We are an Easter People!
Many: **We are the claimed sons and daughters of the Living God,
made new in Jesus Christ, and in his Spirit of truth.**
One: Come, be found in this embrace of new love and
let us proclaim the good news:
Many: **We are the Easter People of today...
embracing all colors, nations, and races!**

Invocation

Our most Gracious God, the Good News that came to the disciples those many years ago comes afresh to us today and makes us catch our breath, for you have raised Christ from death into life, and we as his followers are heirs to that promise ourselves! Open our eyes that we might believe and in this hour of worship bring this message afresh to us, though the words of our preacher of the day, through the music we share as a congregation and choir, and through the fellowship we share with one another. Come, Spirit Divine, and capture in us afresh the Good News of the resurrection!

This we pray in the precious name of Jesus! **Amen. Alleluia!**

Prayer of Confession

Gather us together, O God, from our places of indifference and fear toward others, for we have not loved each other as we should. We have not kept Jesus' commandment to love one another and have not loved others as you have loved us, for these things are hard things to do! But gather us together, O God, and help us bring our hearts into your realm of justice, mercy, forgiveness, and joy again! Help us see that it is only in coming to you that our hearts can be renewed, our hope reborn and our wrongs forgiven.

Assurance of Grace

Friends, hear the Good News! God has forgiven each of us and calls us to take our parts in the human drama of redeeming love. Praise be to God who accepts us and uses our very human lives in the unfolding story of salvation and new life!

Offering

Invitation

Freely you have received.
Freely give that others may see the Christ in our midst
and be renewed this day.

Doxology *(in Hawaiian)*

*Ho'ona'i i ka Makua mau, ke Keiki me ka 'Uhane no.
Ke Akua mau ho'omaika'i pu. Ko keia ao, ko kela ao. Amene.*

Prayer of Dedication

Bless these gifts, O God, that by them we may dedicate ourselves to you and through them we may show the world the measure of your love. This we ask in the name of Christ Jesus, your perfect gift and our precious savior.

Congregational Response: The Queen's Prayer

*Following the overthrow of the Hawaiian Monarch in 1893 by the United States, Queen Lili'uokalani was put under house arrest. During that time, in 1895, she penned the words and music of this beautiful prayer. The musical setting of the prayer may be found in **New Century Hymnal**, 580.*

*'O kou aloha no A ia i ka Lani, 'o kou 'oia 'i'o, He hemolele ho'i. Amene.
(English translation: Your love is in heaven and your truth so perfect.)*

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious and Loving God, today we gather with your people called from different nation homes from around the Pacific, and with our brothers and sisters of other nations represented in the United Church of Christ. Here may we learn to re-examine our lives as the disciples and followers of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Today, because our lives are so interwoven with others around the globe, we stand in need of renewal and new life in Jesus! Open our lives to the winds of your ever-present Spirit, so like the mountain breezes of the Pacific islands! Open our hearts to your gracious empowering love so we can see the beauty of our sisters and brothers, as beautiful as the rainbows and the moving clouds of hope that dot Pacific Ocean skies! Let us rekindle the joy that is ours as we all drink from your deep waters of renewal, joy, and new life in Christ Jesus! O God of joy and new life, open our hearts and minds to all that you make possible this day and bring us into the hope of a new tomorrow! (...continue with local prayers and concerns...).

Communion Prayer

It is good for us to be together as an *Ohana* and family
around this table set by our Savior, Jesus Christ.
It is good that we can share this bread and this cup
and to know that we are accepted, as we are, at Christ's table.

On that night when he was later to be betrayed
and after they had supped together in the Upper Room,
Jesus took bread from the table
and he lifted it in their presence, saying
"This is my body which is broken for you."
And in the same manner, he took a cup from the table
and said to his disciples:
*"This is the cup of salvation, shed for the sins of many.
Drink you from it...and do this, in remembrance of me."*

None of this meant much to the disciples
for Jesus was yet to be taken away
and crucified on a terrifying Roman cross!
It is only in remembering that they later knew
what this meant to them
...and now to us. Jesus suffered, yes, and died, yes!
...but three days later, he arose... "conquering sin and death",
thanks be to God!

Now, we no longer fear death, for Jesus has promised
*"...those who love me will be loved by my Father,
and I will love them and reveal myself to them."* (Jn 14:21).
This is the Good News we share as God's Easter People!

Come to this table, then, as you are, and here you are welcomed
and offered new life in Jesus through this bread and cup
which are shared in a community
that includes persons from all walks of life,
and from every nation on earth!
We are part of God's wondrous *Ohana*, here on earth today!

Come, now O Holy Spirit, and bless this bread and this cup
that in our sharing, our eyes may be opened and our hearts renewed.
Come, bless us in our taking and believing,
so that in our renewal will be revealed our commitment
to making this world and our communities
places of healing, joy and new life in Christ Jesus!

Amen!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, O God, for this time of sharing this simple meal. May this bread made from many grains of wheat now become a source of new life as we become visible examples of Jesus' love and joy for the world. And may this taste of new wine become an example of how even the smallest act of caring can transform lives and be a place for new life to begin! We are blessed to be part of this world-wide community of hope this day. Let us go into the world as new beings in Christ Jesus!

Amen!

Benediction

(Please create a "Friendship Circle": the congregation is invited to encircle the sanctuary, holding hands for the benediction, followed by the singing of an "Alleluia.")

.New in the Spirit: Prayers for Pacific Island and Asian American Sunday, was written by the Rev. Dr. Tom Fujita, of the Waipahu United Church of Christ, Waialua, Hawaii (island of Oahu), a PAAM church. **Invocation, Prayer of Dedication, and Pastoral Prayer** are based on ones written by Rev. Fujita for Lihue Christian Church, UCC, Kauai, Hawaii.



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