



**MĀNOA VALLEY**  
**CHURCH**

# Annual Report

## 2023

United Church of Christ  
2728 Huapala Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96822

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## Statement of Faith

The following Statement of Faith contains the basic tenets of the Christian beliefs of this church:

We believe in God, the Eternal Spirit, who is made known to us in Jesus Christ.  
We believe in the divine inspiration and authority of the Holy Bible.

We testify that:

God calls the worlds into being,  
creates humankind in the divine image,  
and sets before us the ways of life and death.

God seeks in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

God judges all humanity and all nations by that will of righteousness  
declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Lord,  
God has come to us  
and shared our common lot,  
conquering sin and death  
and reconciling the whole creation to its Creator.

God bestows upon us the Holy Spirit,  
creating and renewing the Church of Jesus Christ,  
binding in covenant faithful people of all ages,  
tongues, and races.

God calls us into the Church  
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,  
to be servants in the service of the whole human family,  
to proclaim the gospel to all the world  
and resist the powers of evil,  
to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table,  
to join him in his passion and victory.

God promises to all who trust in the gospel  
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,  
courage in the struggle for justice and peace,  
the presence of the Holy Spirit in trial and rejoicing,  
and eternal life in that kingdom which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto God. Amen.

(Adapted from the Statement of Faith approved by the Second General Synod of the United Church of Christ held in Oberlin, Ohio, July 5-9, 1959 and revised by Robert V. Moss.)

## **Mission Statement of Manoa Valley Church**

We believe that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, is calling us to obey the commandments to love God and our neighbor and to make disciples in His name.

Therefore, it is our purpose to provide ways through which the people of Manoa Valley and Honolulu can know Christ and make Christ known.

To accomplish this, we will equip people through:

- joyful, Christ-centered worship
- networks of caring and fellowship
- opportunities for spiritual growth and discipleship training.

We will reach out to the world through:

- evangelistic efforts to share the gospel in word and deed with friends, relatives, associates, and neighbors
- programs of service to touch areas of human need with the love of Christ
- support of mission efforts throughout the world.

To God alone be the glory!

## **The Covenant of Manoa Valley Church**

We hereby covenant and commit ourselves to give meaning to the beliefs in the Statement of Faith in the following ways:

We place our lives in God's hands and will strive to give Christ's teachings a practical priority in our lives.

We will strive to become informed, mature, active Christians through regular worship, reading and study of the Bible, prayer, and sharing our faith with others.

We will make the giving of our time, talent, and treasure a responsible, regular, and joyful part of our lives.

We will strive to embody the example of Christ in our attitudes toward and relations with our fellow human beings.

With trust in God's saving grace, we accept this as our covenant of discipleship.  
Amen.

## Vital Statistics

Total Membership, January 1, 2023 158

### Number received

Confession of Faith	1	
Reaffirmation of Faith	3	
By transfer	0	
Moved to active status	....0	+4

### Number removed

By death	3	
By transfer	0	
By resignation	0	
Moved to inactive status	0	
Record error	0	-3

**Total membership, December 31, 2023 159**

Received Into Membership	Yumi Hirota
	Louise Yamamoto
	Warren Kunitomo
	Wimberly Grove
	<i>*Gwendolyn Kirkland (Associate)</i>

## Deaths

February 11, 2023	Nobue Izutzu
May 19, 2023	Robert Yamafuji
2023	Susan Quimby

## Special Offerings for 2023

One Great Hour of Sharing	\$1,097.00
Neighbors in Need	\$1,168.02
Strengthen the Church	\$1,116.52
UCC Christmas Fund	\$3,027.00
Hawai'i Wildfire Relief	\$3,231.52

## **Senior Pastor Annual Report 2023**

Rev. Abraham Han

Dear Mānoa Valley Church ‘Ohana,

As we gather to meet for our annual meeting, I trust it will be a time for us to reflect on the blessings and challenges of the past year. In 2023, we've journeyed together in faith, grown in our understanding of God and His Word, grown in our understanding of who we are in Jesus Christ, and we have strived to be His hands and feet in our community. All while experiencing the Triune God's faithfulness in our midst.

In 2023, our journey through the Scriptures began with Christmastide and continued through "The Parables of Jesus," "Multiply: Becoming Disciples Who Make More Disciples," and experiencing the profound seasons of Holy Week, Easter, Advent, and Christmas.

While I was away on sabbatical from September through November, we were blessed with the gifted preaching of Pastor Evelin who focused on three special women in Jesus' genealogy, Pastor Alan's insightful series on Psalm 23, and Pastor Gwendolyn's convicting series on stewardship. Their contributions were profound and invaluable, and I extend my heartfelt thanks for their dedication and their thoughtful and inspiring teaching.

This past year, my pastoral care responsibilities extended to numerous individuals and families, with hospital and home visits, counseling sessions, and supporting families through significant life events, emphasizing our commitment to being a church that cares deeply for each other.

One of many great privileges I have in my role is to collaborate with the Worship Committee, Praise Team, Children's Ministry, Christian Education Committee, and deacons in planning meaningful worship services for our community, including the celebration of the sacraments (communion, a baptism, and a wedding), marking significant spiritual milestones and signifying our shared faith journey.

One of many things to celebrate from this past year has been our relationships— after a journey of mutual discernment, we welcomed six new members to our church family. We also grew in our commitment to broaden our community partnerships and foster community connections, as we continued our relationships with local organizations, including those from the Mānoa Stakeholders group. These connections have created opportunities for joint efforts to care for the community's needs, including caring for those who often find themselves on the margins of society. One highlight was the opportunity to help facilitate/host a food drive for our sisters and brothers who fell victim to the fires on Maui.

We have also developed the relationships within our church community through our Connection Group ministry, where groups like Fun with Art, Fit4Life, the MVC Book Club,

the MVC Prayer Fellowship, Talk Story Tuesdays, various study groups, Open Gym Volleyball and Basketball, among other groups have provided diverse opportunities for spiritual growth, relationship building, and community engagement.

Our church community continues to show its strong commitment and passion to be Christ's Salt and Light in the community by being present and caring for others through the organizations we support via the Missions Committee, and hosting community events such as the Easter Sunday Event, Family Movie Night, and the Harvest Fair.

In this past year, as I've continued to support and supervise our dedicated office, Preschool, and After School Care staff, I'm continually amazed by their giftedness and dedication. I'm grateful to serve alongside such a wonderful team of individuals. I've also had the privilege to serve on the Hawaii Conference United Church of Christ's Committee on Ministry, joining leaders within our conference to care for the wider church community, including supporting and equipping future pastors. This has helped build connections within our conference, support our denomination, and stay connected and contribute to the wider church community.

Challenges that have surfaced in 2023 that I believe we as Mānoa Valley Church should address include our current staffing limitations (which I believe are impeding our church growth) and the need for our church to review/revise our polity/governance structure to better suit our congregation's current status while remaining true to our congregationalist roots and UCC tradition (more specifically, adopting a structure that takes into account the changing demographics of our congregation and shifting generational priorities, and also calls for fewer elected leaders).

In 2024, with the support of the congregation, I plan to launch several new initiatives that will, hopefully, begin to address some of our primary needs and challenges, including an internship program (to help nurture future leaders and fill in some of our leadership needs), revitalizing our youth, college, and early career ministries, working with our directors to improve/expand our Preschool and After School Care programs, offering parenting and marriage/family support classes, exploring the launch of a Marketplace ministry/mentoring ministry, expanding our prayer ministry, sermon series and teachings focused on outreach, and organizing more community outreach events.

I'd like to conclude this reflection of the past year by offering my sincere gratitude to all the staff, volunteers, and congregation members for their unwavering support, service, and dedication to the church community.

A special thanks to our Praise Team, deacons, A/V team, Children's Ministry volunteers, Christian Education Committee, worship leaders, and the Worship Committee, especially Ruth Komatsu and David Park, for their tireless efforts and dedication.

And finally, I offer my deep appreciation to all Committee members, Council members, Executive Committee members, and volunteers for their hard work and unwavering commitment and service. Your contributions, both visible and behind the scenes, have a



significant impact on our church community and play a vital role in allowing us to join in the Kingdom work to which Jesus calls us.

As we journey together as Jesus Christ's church in 2024, may we be filled with renewed faith and hope as we place our trust in God's guidance and draw strength from the presence of the Holy Spirit that so powerfully lives within us. And may the Triune God lead us forward as we strive to pursue a deeper understanding of what it means to be Jesus Christ's church, following Him and responding to His invitation to join Him in His transformative work in the world. I look forward to traveling on this journey with you, as we live life together seeking to be Jesus' light in the world that He so loves.

In Christ's Love, and for His Glory,

Abe

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Abraham Han  
Senior Minister, Mānoa Valley Church

# Moderator Annual Report 2023

Bette Uyeda

## Looking back at 2023

The year 2023 presented many challenges and opportunities for growth for Manoa Valley Church. We emerged from the pandemic with new ideas regarding our ministry in the community. During the three-year period when the church had to close its doors, we had to reinvent the way we conduct our worship services; operate our child care programs; provide our spiritual, educational, social, and recreational programs; and continue to serve and respond to needs in our community.

Some of the highlights of the past year include the following:

- Continued to grow our *Connection Group ministry* which offers members and friends opportunities to learn, develop skills, strengthen their faith, and form meaningful relationships with others in our church and the community. Some of the activities offered include a fitness class, a book club, a marriage enrichment group, a prayer fellowship, and “a talk story” discussion time with the Pastor.
- Strengthened our *child care programs* by stabilizing our staff in both the Preschool and After School Care Programs. We also developed a core of church volunteers who care for the children while teachers meet for staff meetings and planning.
- Provided opportunities for the Church family to *connect with families in our child care programs* through a family movie night, an Easter Sunday celebration; Christmas caroling in the community, and other holiday activities. We also worked with these families when they joined us to make sandwiches and food for people in need.
- Carried out *needed renovations* to our Church facility including the removal of mold in the Church office, repairs of windows in our gym; and major upgrades to our kitchen.
- Received *five new members* into our Church fellowship: **Wimberly Grove, Yumi Hirota, Gwendolyn Kirkland, Warren Kunimoto, Louise Yamamoto.**
- Held our *Harvest Fair* in November for the community. The event provided our members and friends, young and old, with the opportunity to work together to organize and carry out a major fundraiser for the Church.
- Supported *our mission programs* by awarding financial grants to agencies serving the community and providing meals and financial support to families and individuals in need.

In 2023, the Church reaffirmed its call to Pastor Abe by approving another three-year contract for June 2023 through May 2026. After conducting an evaluation of the Pastor’s

first three years at the Church, the Personnel Committee recommended a renewal of his contract which was approved by the Council as well as the Church membership in May.

After completing his three-year contract period, Pastor Abe was awarded a three-month sabbatical leave which he completed during September through November. He returned refreshed and eager to plan advent activities in December and resume his ministry at Manoa Valley Church.

2023 was unique because we continued our Church ministry without an elected Moderator or Vice-Moderator. I want to thank the members of the Executive Committee including **Catherine Miyahira**, Financial Secretary, **Alan Ito**, Treasurer; and **Kelvin Hamada**, Trustees Chair for their support as I attempted to lead the Council in my role as Secretary. With support from the Executive Committee as well as the hardworking members of the Council and the many enthusiastic volunteers who support our various programs and activities, the Church was able to carry out its ministry in our community.

### **Looking ahead to 2024**

You have probably heard that we are still trying to fill the positions of Council Secretary and Vice-Moderator for 2024. No one has stepped up yet so in the interim your leaders will forge ahead and use the skills, experiences, and enthusiasm of those who have committed themselves to serve on the Council or in the many volunteer positions that we have. If you feel called to be part of this movement and are willing to use your time, talents, and enthusiasm to serve God and our beloved Manoa Valley Church, please let us know and join us! If you feel you have no energy or time to do anything more, consider the words of Scripture:

*They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.* Isaiah 40:31

Bette Uyeda  
Secretary/Moderator, Church Council

# Board of Trustees

## Annual Report 2023

Kel Hamada

*“We are here to do God’s work in our community with our body, our hands, and our feet. To physically do His will, remembering that He is the Center of it all, and we bless Him in all that we do.”*

Here are some highlights of the projects that were completed:

- The upkeep and repair of the Preschool and Afterschool Care playground and equipment
- With Catherine’s help, we drafted a new Funeral Policy.
- Replacement of the louvers on the mauka side of the Christian Life Center with galvanized screens.
- A new water shutoff valve and copper piping were installed through the breezeway. This was done to replace the old pipes that went around the sanctuary that were rusting and deteriorating, causing major water loss.
- The kitchen renovation was completed, with new cabinets installed. Thank you to the volunteers who helped remove the items in the old cabinets and put them back when the cabinets were installed.
- New backboards were installed in the gym. This is the start of improving the gym for community use.
- Our pew restoration project is still ongoing and should be completed in early 2024.
- Established an Active Threat & Disaster Planning subcommittee, chaired by Roger Au, under the umbrella of the Trustees.
- Under the leadership of Harvest Fair chairs Diane Ishida and Richelle, we held a mini fair selling baked goods, T-shirts, plants, and hand-crafted items, art, and food. The plan for 2024 is to have the return of a full Harvest Fair.

Our major projects for the upcoming year 2024 should be finishing our pew restorations, the cottage renovation, and the renovation of the Upper Room and the Associate Pastors office, all in God’s time.

To God Alone be Glory.

Kel Hamada  
Chair, Board of Trustees

Members: Alan Ito, Diane Ito, Catherine Miyahira, Earl Yonehara, Gerald Saito, Mark Au, Roger Au  
Ex-Officio: Pastor Abe

# Communication Committee

## Annual Report 2023

Richelle Fujioka

In 2023 the major focus of the Communication Committee was compiling and distributing the electronic newsletter, *Mānoa Connection*. It was one of MVC's primary mode of communication and consisted of 12 issues published on the first Wednesday of each month. We emailed a PDF of the newsletter to more than 160 friends and members as well as the Preschool and ASC parents. We were also integral to the events and efforts that relied upon publicity such as requests for participation in Missions drives and the Harvest Fair.

For the production of the eNewsletter, we were amply served by a small but dedicated staff. Roy Miyahira was oftentimes the sole photographer for the newsletter and the photo archives we created with Office Manager David Park's help are a result of his efforts. Also, Roy was the layout person for the newsletter, a labor-intensive task. For that reason, the Communication Committee has put word out that we are seeking another tech-proficient person to help fill that role. Bette Uyeda, Richelle Fujioka and Louise Yamamoto (a new addition to our committee) were primarily responsible for writing, editing and connecting with other members to solicit articles that appeared in the newsletter. It should be noted that many individuals stepped forward to write pieces—Ron Lee, Kathy Lee, Sue Yamamoto, Evelin Tai, Maizie Okimoto, Earl Yonehara, Inga Park Okuna and Pastor Abe. Catherine Miyahira reported on special collections and other Trustee matters. We had several special features contributed by Pastor Gwendolyn Kirkland, Peggy Cha, and Logan Uechi.

Each edition provided information and updates regarding the work of the Church Council and the various committees, along with letters from the Pastor and Pastor of Children and Family Ministries. There was regular coverage of MVC activities, especially our connection groups, the childcare programs, and Sunday School. As the number of events and activities increased, we included a calendar to remind and perhaps motivate readers to join in. We included announcements requesting help for various service projects (e.g., providing meals for houseless families) and for galvanizing support for our November Harvest Fair.

For our 50<sup>th</sup> Harvest Fair, we created a flyer (thanks to Roy) which was distributed to businesses and a large banner (thanks to Louise) which was displayed where we usually advertise our Preschool. We ran television and print media promotions (thanks to Paul Mark).

In looking ahead to 2024, we intend to carry on the crucial production of the eNewsletter and expand its coverage and distribution. We will continue to discuss the means by which MVC information will be archived and available for future use.

Respectfully submitted,

Richelle Fujioka, Chair

Current Members: Roy Miyahira, Bette Uyeda and Louise Yamamoto

Past Member: Paul Mark

## **Finance Committee Annual Report 2023**

Warren Kunimoto

Your Finance Committee currently has 5 members: Alan Ito (Treasurer), Warren Kunimoto (Chr.), David Shimabukuro, Ryan Hamadon, and Larry Okinaga. Pastor Abe attends when possible. We are assisted by Alison Kawamoto, the church accountant and HR specialist.

In January and February 2023, your Finance Committee reviewed and passed the Pre-School and After School Care budgets for 2023-2024. The budgets were prepared by Alison with input from the Child Care Committee, the pastors, and staff. Budgets for both child care operations follow the school calendar, which is a fiscal (school) year that begins on August 1st and runs through July. The Pre-School and After School Care are currently in the middle of the 23-24 fiscal year. Budgets are now being prepared for the 24-25 fiscal year.

Over the summer of 2023, your Finance Committee drafted, discussed, and approved an investment policy, which was subsequently approved by the MVC Council. The policy provides for conservative investments at approved institutions. The church currently has bank accounts at First Hawaiian Bank and Central Pacific Bank. We had investment accounts at the Hawaii Conference Foundation and Vanguard. The Committee approved moving the Vanguard investments to Charles Schwab due to it being easier to work with an institution that has a local office. Your Finance Committee also reallocated the investments between the Hawaii Conference and Schwab accounts to take advantage of rising interest rates for fixed income investments, primarily short term treasuries. Some funds were also recently moved into Certificates of Deposit.

In August 2023, a draft 2024 budget for church operations was made by Alison Kawamoto and Alan Ito based on budgets submitted by the church committees. The proposed budgets were reviewed, discussed and approved with adjustments. The 2024 budget was approved by the congregation in October.

In December 2023, your Finance Committee considered rules for accepting donations of stock to Manoa Valley Church. There is a significant tax advantage for the donor of stock. The policy includes that the stock must be readily marketable and will be sold after the donation is received.

Throughout the year, your Finance Committee works with other church committees and the pastors as needed or requested. We track the planned and current activities of the Trustees, as their work maintaining, repairing, and enhancing the church facilities often has a significant impact on expenses. Advanced planning is needed to ensure that adequate funds are available to meet those needs. Interim financials for church operations and Child Care are also regularly reviewed.

# Nominating Committee

## Annual Report 2023

Sam Browning

In 2023, there were 48 individuals who served in 70 positions. Out of the five terms ending in '23, two members continued another term beginning in '24, while three completed their term and did not continue on another committee. One member passed on to a better place, while one member stepped down in '24 for personal reasons.

As of January 31, 2024, of the 15 committees and the Church Council, there are 48 members and 4 non-members to serve 74 positions on the 2024 slate at Manoa Valley Church (MVC). There are 13 individuals serving in two positions, 3 individuals serving in three positions, and one brave soul serving in four positions! It's great to see 4 first-time servants serving this upcoming year! The Church Council, Child Care, Christian Education and communication committees are still looking for slots to fill. There are currently 6 vacancies which include:

1. Vice-Moderator on the Church Council
2. Secretary on the Church Council
3. Young Adult Representative (under age 30) on the Christian Education committee
4. Aloha Programs Coordinator
5. Peace & Justice Representative
6. Nominating Committee Member

Here is what the last half decade of slates of elected MVC ministry and committee members reveal:

	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2023</u>	<u>2024</u>
<b>Church Council</b>						
<i>Officers &amp; Y.A.R. Secretary</i>	5	6	5	4	4	4 (vacancy- Vice-Mod. & Secretary)
<b>Worship</b>						
Deacons	6	5	5	5	5	5
Worship	8	7	6	6	6	7
Sisters & Brothers	5	5	5	5	5	4 (sub committee)
<b>Faith &amp; Develop.</b>						
Child Care	5	7	5	4	4	4
Christian Ed.	7	6	7	5	5	6
Senior Ministry	6	7	6	6	7	7 (sub committee)
<b>Hospit. &amp; Outrea.</b>						
<i>Aloha Programs Co.</i>	1	2	3	3	2	2
Missions	4	3	3	5	4	5
<i>Peace &amp; Justice Rep.</i>	1	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Admin. &amp; Support</b>						
Communications	5	4	3	3	3	3

Finance	5	4	4	4	5	5
Nominating	2	2	2	2	2	2
Personnel	3	2	3	3	4	5
Sen. Pastor-Pastoral	5	7	6	6	6	6
Trustees	5	6	6	6	6	7
Total:	73	75	71	69	70	74

I will close with the same statement as that I have stated over the course of my 5-years on the nominating committee, because it is just as heart felt and relevant then as it is today. Thank you to all of you who have served, serve and/or will serve on committees at MVC, to ultimately further God's kingdom on earth-your gift of your time, talent and treasure is greatly appreciated. As we recall the stories of both *The Parable of the Bags of Gold* in Matthew 25:14-30 and *The Parable of the Ten Minas* in Luke 19:12-27, let us serve in a joyful and humble manner, so that one day we will hear those special comforting words, "Well done good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Mt. 25:21, Lk. 19:17)

There are 28 members whose term would end at the end of 2024, and there are some who are continuing to faithfully fill a need in the church, but are requesting/need a break/sabbatical. Please pray for how you and others may best serve in the future at MVC. Sarie and I pray that you live a joyful new year filled with serving the Lord in 2024 and beyond!



# **Personnel Committee Annual Report 2023**

Earl Yonehara

The two major responsibilities of your Personnel Committee were to conduct the annual performance evaluation of the Senior Pastor and oversee the terms of call process 3 months prior to the end of a 3-year call agreement. In 2023, your committee spent a considerable amount of time and effort on the renewal of the Call process, followed by a review and recommendation of a compensation package. The availability of the Zoom on-line application continues to be a blessing that has enabled us to conduct face-to-face meetings, including joint meetings with representatives from the Pastoral Relations, Finance, and Executive Committees.

## **Senior Pastor Annual Review**

The Annual Performance Review coincided with the 3-year Renewal of Call process. Both processes rely on the results of a performance evaluation conducted among the congregation. A mail-out survey covering the 2021-2022 evaluation period received a very favorable response despite the length and detailed nature of the questionnaire. The survey questions also required a numerical rating on the five (5) different areas of pastoral leadership: Preaching, teaching, pastoral counseling, community outreach, and administration. However, the late start to the evaluation process resulted in the final survey results being reported in October 2023. With the upcoming Renewal of Call process commencing no later than March 2023, the decision of your committee was to use the highlights of the last performance evaluation and develop a survey instrument that focused on how the congregation views its future path. Unfortunately, this instrument was not received favorably, resulting in few responses. In view of the highly favorable feedback on Pastor's previous evaluations, the decision was to move ahead with the Renewal of Call process.

## **Renewal of Call Process**

In accordance with the MVC Bylaws, the Call Process must involve the Pastoral Relations Committee. Your committee decided to include representatives from the Finance and Executive Committees for input, specifically on the compensation issue. A joint decision was made to hold a special congregational meeting on May 17, 2023, to vote on the Pastor's Renewal of a 3-year Terms of Call. Highlights of the survey results completed in October 2022 along with the Senior Pastor's 3-year Summary Report were distributed before the vote. Notice was given beforehand to the congregation that the compensation package needed to be finalized and would be announced before the start of Pastor's new term on June 1, 2023. A ballot vote process was used

and resulted in the congregation voting nearly unanimously to approve the call, with only 1 abstention. The representatives from the Pastoral, Finance, and Executive Committees met on the compensation issue to discuss the options available for consideration. All participants agreed that whatever the final decision, the message that we needed to convey was that the compensation reflected how highly valued the Pastor's continued service was to the congregation. There were 3 options to consider. 1) percentage increase in the base salary; 2) a no-interest loan to assist the Pastor with future home purchase; and 3) a one-time bonus. Upon checking comparable salaries in the UCC churches, MVC's compensation was in the higher range. A review of the IRS Tax Code for Churches strictly prohibits no- interest loans and could result in huge financial penalties to the church. The decision of the members was to approve a one-time bonus of \$10,000. Changes were made to the language of the Terms of Call Agreement to reflect the new compensation, along with other language changes to clarify the benefits and approved by the Council at its regularly scheduled meeting.

### **Other Personnel Related Matters**

Your committee voted to approve the annual recommended 6.5% COLA increase in calendar year 2023 for regular full-time and part-time staff in accordance with the MVC Employee Handbook. Your committee also met to discuss the impact of the grants that Alison prepared for Federal, State, and private non-profits to take advantage of both public and private funds made available to assist community organizations that were financially impacted by the COVID pandemic. Feedback from Alison detailing the grant applications showed that MVC received a total of 19 grants amounting to over \$814,000. This money was distributed over the course of the 2022 and 2023 calendar years. Your committee met on the issue of how to recognize Alison's selfless effort and the huge financial impact that money has had on our church's finances. At a meeting called in October, a valid point was raised that any personnel related matter, including compensation, needed to follow the chain of command. Since the Senior Pastor is her direct supervisor, he should be the person responsible for determining and initiating any compensation issue.

Mahalo to committee members Dianne Ishida, Alan Ito, David Shimabukuro and Pastor Abe as ex-officio member. Their critical input and insightful comments were essential to helping your committee discern God's will for His church. We also want to thank the representatives of the Pastoral Relations, Finance, and Executive Committees for their input on the Call Process and the Pastor's final compensation.

# **Worship Committee Annual Report 2023**

Ruth Komatsu

2023 Worship Committee members were Karen Hamada, Stephen Hong, Inga Park Okuna, Susan Shiraki, Leah Young, and Ruth Komatsu. Mae Saito (representing the Deacons) attended our meetings and assisted with tasks. Ruth Komatsu served as Chair and Council representative. We thank the committee members for their service, flexibility, and faithfulness.

## **Worship Services**

100% of this year's Sunday worship services were held in-person and livestreamed on Zoom. Potential worshipers were sent the Order of Worship and Zoom link by email on Sunday mornings, allowing them to join the pre-service chat at 9:30 and/or the worship service at 10:00. Special services, such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Christmas Eve Candlelight, were in-person only (not livestreamed on Zoom). Christmas Eve Candlelight service was recorded and shared online on a later date.

Weekly, Ruth prepared presentation screens and pre-recorded videos, which were inserted into the master Keynote presentation on Sunday mornings by David Park. The AV Team of Ana Tai, Miles Han, Mateo Browning, Jerry Hamada, Roy Miyahira, Kel Hamada and David Park worked together to present a smooth service every Sunday. After the service, David P. compiled the pre-recorded and live recorded portions of the service into one worship service video. This video was shared with members on Mondays via email, the MVC website, and two Facebook groups. When David was not available in person, he continued to troubleshoot and perform his pre- and post- service technology tasks, with Ruth gathering the recordings and uploading them for David's access.

During Pastor Abe's 3-month sabbatical from September through November, guest speakers Evelin Tai (September), the Rev. Alan Maeno (October), and the Rev. Gwendolyn Kirkland (November) presented messages on women in Jesus' genealogy, Psalm 23, and Stewardship respectively.

## **Worship Attendance**

We averaged 83 in-person and 15 Zoom worshipers on Sundays. This was a 6 person in person increase and a 2 person online decrease from 2022. We continued to offer viewing of the live Zoom broadcast in the breezeway on the 55" screen. A handful of people took advantage of this every Sunday. The compiled video recordings of the worship services

averaged 45 views (“hits”).

#### “Regular” Committee Tasks

Worship Committee members prepared the Sanctuary for weekly in-person worship services. Tasks included folding bulletins, changing and lighting altar candles, tidying up, bringing out welcome table and easel, and setting up for breezeway viewing. Artificial areca palms are now being used behind the pulpit and on both sides of the altar because maintenance of five live palms, especially pruning, thinning, and repotting, has become more difficult for committee members. Two live palms continue to be used at the back of the sanctuary.

The committee provided adornments for the observances of the liturgical seasons (Ordinary Time, Lent, Eastertide, Pentecost, Advent, and Christmastide), for special days (Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve Candlelight), and provided the coordination of worship leaders, scripture readers, and Children’s Moments’ presenters. Congregants were welcomed with name tags, worship bulletins, copies of the Upper Room, and monthly communion elements (prepared by the Deacons).

#### Acknowledgment of Lay Participants

Many non-Committee members participated in worship services throughout the year: Children’s Moments were presented by Sam Browning, Kristen Kawachi, and Committee-member Inga Park Okuna. The regular rotation of Worship Leaders consisted of Inga, Sue Yamamoto, Sam Browning, and Carrie Glenn. The open spot in the rotation (every 4th Sunday) was filled by Ron Hashiro, Bette Uyeda, and Richelle Fujioka. Services on 5th Sundays were led by the Youth. Weekly scripture was read by a 20- person rotation. 35 different individuals/families provided altar flowers. Thank you!

#### Music

Reggie Tamashiro provided prelude and offertory music on piano or organ. Praise Band of Reggie, Sam Browning, Carrie Glenn, Karen Hamada, Ron Hashiro, Stephen Hong (band leader), Lisa Miyamoto, Neil Okuna, and Roger Au led congregational singing each Sunday. Pre-recorded song videos of Mike Yi and the Praise Band were used at times.

The MVC Worship Committee members are many parts of one body, with each member using her/his special God-given talents and interests to honor our Lord and to help make services meaningful to the worshipers.

## **MVC Deacons Ministry Annual Report 2023**

Mae Saito

Deacons have assisted with communion on the first Sunday of each month. Communion elements are purchased and distributed to those who attend Communion Sundays.

There were five funerals in 2023.

- January 21
- March 11 , 25
- April 15, 22

The chairperson of the deacons assisted Pastor Han and the family of the deceased with the details of items which needed to be addressed before the date of the funeral, the day of the funeral and at the conclusion of the funeral.

# **Christian Education Committee**

## **Annual Report 2023**

Maizie Okimoto

The broad goal of the Christian Education Committee has been to bring together the children and families of Manoa Valley Church and the Childcare Ministries into a loving Ohana. To this end, we have worked together with our Pastor of Children and Family Ministries, Evelin Tai.

The following are the events that CEC participated in the year 2023. Some of these events involved only Manoa Valley Church, while others jointly involved the greater Manoa Community.

### **JANUARY-MAY**

During this time, Sunday School was being taught by Lauren and Kristen Kawachi who used the Dig In Curriculum. Ruth and Karen Hamada led the Praise Singing.

In March, Sunday School and After School Care students combined efforts to fold palm crosses.

In April, the students passed out the crosses on Palm Sunday. An Easter Egg Hunt was held at Manoa Valley Church right after the Worship Service. The Egg Hunt was open to the community and drew a large crowd of people despite the inclement weather. With God's blessing, the volunteers...the Youth, Preschool and Afterschool Care helpers, members of Manoa Valley Church, all coordinated their efforts to supervise the egg hunt and the other planned activities. The children hunted for eggs, dyed eggs, played games and redeemed their eggs for a goody bag which included a lovely Easter book and treats! Everyone was invited to have a hot dog and chips.

### **JUNE-AUGUST**

Sunday School took a Summer Break during this time. CEC continued to provide Child Care in the Gym for children excused from Worship Service.

### **SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER**

In September, Sunday School began, with Rally Sunday held on the first Sunday after Labor Day. We started with three former SS families and five children. At that time, there were four teachers, two who led singing and two presenting lessons. Currently, we have nine families and thirteen children ranging from age two to eleven. We have five teachers, two who lead singing (Ruth Komatsu and Karen Hamada) and three who take turns teaching the lesson (Dawn Hamada, Jan Khil and Kathy Lee). We are using the Simply Loved Curriculum. The teachers invest a lot of time in their lesson preparation and the children enthusiastically participate in the weekly planned activities.

In December, the Sunday School children each received an Advent calendar.

Respectfully submitted,

Maizie Okimoto

CEC members: Carolyn Okinaga, Dawn Hamada, Ronald Lee, and co-chair, Joanne Funasaki

# **Childcare Committee Annual Report 2023**

Dawn Hamada



# **Manoa Valley Church Preschool**

## **Annual Report 2023**

Evelin Tai

For 3 weeks in December, during chapel time, the children acted out the Christmas story with costumes and simple props. It was a joyous time as we celebrated Advent and prepared for our Savior's birth. For the Christmas program on Dec 15, 2023, the children sang various Christmas songs to a sanctuary filled with parents, grandparents (even a couple of great grandparents!) and many friends. Pastor Abe passed out freshly popped popcorn to all the happy children. Later that evening, the popcorn machine went into overtime when families in our PSC and ASC programs joined the church community for pizza, cookies, hot chocolate and Christmas caroling. We spread cheer to the seniors at the Manoa Care Center, to the Fire Station and ended our time at the Christmas tree at Manoa Marketplace. About 80-90 people from the Preschool and ASC program attended.

We are thankful for our dedicated team of teachers who pour into our children daily. In addition, we are thankful for our teacher consultant (Wimberly Grove) and substitute teachers as well as other faithful church volunteers who have provided support during the past year.

Our top ranked curriculum promotes growth and development for the whole child. Field trips, guest speakers, service opportunities and weekly chapel services round out their educational experience. Guru Guru Kitchen provides healthy and delicious lunches for our keiki. This year, we added several on-site in-person trainings to further equip our teachers. Topics included teamwork, effective communication, managing challenging behaviors in as well as promoting STEM in the classroom. These training sessions not only fulfill the mandatory State requirements for teacher training, but also serve to build teamwork and strengthen relationships among staff.

Beyond broad initiatives, we are committed to supporting the varying aspirations of our individual families and students. During parent teacher conferences in October, parents and teachers communicate goals and objectives for the school year as well as future kindergarten plans. While most families choose Manoa Elementary, Noelani or other public schools, 3 students out of our class of 20 applied to Punahou last year. We were pleased that 2 were accepted and 1 waitlisted.

I would like to thank Pastor Abe, The Child Care Board (Chair Dawn Hamada), The Trustees, Moderator Bette Uyeda, Earl Yonehara, Dawn and Kel Hamada, Alison Kawamoto and David Park and so many faithful volunteers at Manoa Valley Church for supporting the preschool in many ways including in prayer. Our students and families are so precious and we thank God for this opportunity to know and serve them.

**School Year:** August 2023-July 2024 (closed last two weeks in July)

**Hours:** 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

**Cost:** Application Fee: \$50

Tuition: \$1,175 per month

**Staff:** Director: Evelin Tai

Teachers: Kelley Martin, Crystee Hoagland

Assistants: Norann Kim, Ying Zhang, Ky Makekau

Teaching Consultant: Wimberly Grove

**Enrollment:** 34-40 children (current enrollment is 40 with waitlist)

# **Manoa Valley Church After-School Care/Summer Fun Annual Report 2023**

Trisha Honda

At Manoa Valley Church After School Care and Summer Fun, our focus remains on how to meet the needs of the community while providing a safe and nurturing environment to the children enrolled in our programs. We continue this wonderful ministry to all that God has sent to our church.

God is Good and led 13 Program Leaders to the After School Care Program. These angels are Briana Paden, Chitra Sahdev, Dalton Teague, Josiah Wong, Kapa`akealoha Nishimura, Kylee Soares, Lerrianne Mantanona, Leslie and Yuko Fukata, Mia Caliri, McKenzie Peay, Sarah Sutton, and Yasata Shakur. This amazing staff served as role models sharing their excitement and enthusiasm while connecting with the parents as they pick up their children at the end of a busy day.

During the seven weeks of summer fun, the children enjoyed activities such as daily praise and worship, arts and crafts, sports and games. While on our excursions to the Waikiki Aquarium, and Honolulu Zoo, we learned more about the animals in their special habitats. We also learned how to care for our ocean. Leading the morning activities were Chitra Sahdev, McKenzie Peay, Lerrianne Mantanona and Kapa`akealoha Nishimura while Nia Clark-Gonzalez, So Yun Song, Yasata Shukur and Mia Caliri supervised the afternoon.

This year we expanded our Enrichment Program. These classes help the students find a hobby and discover new interests. These classes included Spanish language, Introduction to Japanese, building Lego with Bricks 4 Kidz, creative movement with Dance Bomb Hawaii, drawing, painting and sculpting in Ms. Cat's Fun with Art, and learning how to cook.

On behalf of all the families we serve, Thank you for your support and prayers.

Blessings,  
Trisha Honda  
ASC Director

## **ASC: AUGUST 2022-MAY 2023**

ASC Tuition was \$1750  
Manoa School: 74 children  
Noelani School: 22 children  
All Day Care: 33 children  
Total of 128 children

## **SUMMER FUN 2023: JUNE-JULY**

Summer Fun was a total of 7 weeks  
Summer Fun Care: \$1875 (7:30-5:30)  
Weekly Rate: \$275 (7:30-5:30)  
Total of 71 children and 6 Junior Leaders

## **Missions Committee Annual Report 2023**

Susan Yamamoto

Members: Sue Yamamoto, Evie Gallagher, Kathy Lee, Melanie Ching, and Alisa Au  
Peace and Justice: Inga Park Okuna, Heather Flewelling  
Aloha Committee: Reggie Tamashiro

The Missions Committee members were blessed to be able to coordinate missional giving throughout 2023 for MVC. We hope that you enjoyed hearing from some of our mission partners during “Mission Moments” and look forward to sharing more in 2024. We sincerely appreciate the generous support from this congregation as we coordinated opportunities for you to support local organizations through meal preparations, gift cards, pledges, and your prayers.

The process that was implemented in 2022 that required an application for organizations receiving our financial support has continued to work well. This will be standard practice going forward. Details can be found on our website. Ask any of our members, listed above, for more information if you would like to request support for a deserving organization that would share in our ministry of radical Christian hospitality. In 2023, we are grateful for amazing administrative support from Alison and David in the church office!

We will have a new opportunity to support needy individuals in 2024. This Benevolent Fund will afford our staff the grace to bless those in need and allow for pastoral discretion in giving aid. The guidelines will be introduced at the Congregational Meeting and shared during Sunday Worship.

This Church's Missional giving in 2023 was distributed to the following organizations:

<b>Hawaii Ministries</b>	<b>International Ministries</b>
Bible Institute of Hawaii	Wycliffe Bible Translators (Uehara)
Family Promise of Hawaii	Mission to the World (Debbie) 6 months
Good News Prison Ministry	SEND International (Christine)
Hawaiian Island Ministries	
Hawaii Foodbank	<b>UCC Ministries</b>
Honolulu Habitat for Humanity	UCC Transition House (Shelter)
Institute for Human Services	Woman's Board of Missions
InterVarsity Christian Fellowship	Global Ministries
Pacific Health Ministries	Our Church's Wider Mission
River of Life	<b>Giving Projects</b>
St Pius (MISO) Food Bank	UCC Earthquake relief: Turkey & Syria
The Pantry	Kamakapili Church – Milk for Foodbank
Waikiki Health Center	Waikiki Community Center – gift cards
Waikiki Community Center	Catholic Charities – gift cards
	Good News Jail & Prison- Hope Packs
	Family Promise: meal preparation
	Keauhou Shelter: meal preparation

*1 Chronicles 29: 14 – “But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from You, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.”*

## **Senior Ministry Annual Report 2023**

Alene Nakasone

A "Christmas Tea" culminated Senior Ministry's final activity for 2023 on December 4. Many seniors look forward to this annual activity, which includes an arts and crafts project taught by multi-talented Shirley Murakami, an array of delicious refreshments, singing, and fellowship. This year's attendees happily went home with an adorable angel, which could be used as a Christmas tree ornament.

In anticipation of 2024, the year of the Dragon, the committee came up with some energetic ideas, [energetic being one of the characteristics of Dragon People]: such as riding the Skyline (culminating with lunch at some point), visiting sites such as The Iolani Palace via Zoom, inviting business owners to share the history of their establishments, and joining forces with Manoa Parks and Recreation for other activities. Additional suggestions from the general membership would be greatly welcomed and appreciated. Therefore, please share your ideas with any of the following committee members.

The hardworking committee members are:

Evelyn Chong  
Dot Endo  
Evie Gallagher  
Dianne Ishida\*  
Alene Nakasone\*  
Susanne Shimabukuro  
Vina Yamashiro

\*Co-chair

Respectfully submitted by:  
Alene Nakasone