

## **SCRIPTURE READING: Hebrews 11;1-3 & 8-16 (NRSV)**

### **Hebrews 11:1-3    The Meaning of Faith**

**11** Now faith is the assurance<sup>[a]</sup> of things hoped for, the conviction<sup>[b]</sup> of things not seen. <sup>2</sup> Indeed, by faith<sup>[c]</sup> our ancestors received approval. <sup>3</sup> By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.<sup>[d]</sup>

### **Hebrews 11:8-16    The Faith of Abraham**

<sup>8</sup> By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he set out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. <sup>10</sup> For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. <sup>11</sup> By faith, with Sarah's involvement, he received power of procreation, even though he was too old, because he considered<sup>[a]</sup> him faithful who had promised. <sup>12</sup> Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, "as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore."

<sup>13</sup> All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, <sup>14</sup> for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. <sup>15</sup> If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. <sup>16</sup> But as it is, they desire a better homeland, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

**May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His Word.**

**Sermon: “We Encounter God when we Step out in Faith” by Pastor Chris Eng**  
**Lectionary Text: Hebrews 11: 1 - 3, 8 - 16, N.R.S.V.**  
**Sunday, August 7, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.**  
**at the Kailua Christian Church UCC & on Zoom**

**Introduction.** I just prepared myself a mug of Organic Mamaki tea, steeped in hot water for 15 minutes. A gift to me from a member of the church in 2019, this elixir promises good health and longevity as part of the Hawaiian culture. Boosting the immune system, it reduces high blood pressure and lowers cholesterol. Stress and fatigue leave me. Do you see how this is like faith in Hebrews 11: the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen? When we step out in faith, we believe that God will provide. In this initial phase we begin to encounter God. We have not yet received what we had hoped for. But in that moment, we experience the goodness of the Lord. I experienced the goodness of Mamaki leaves after a few sips.

**Looking back, we remember those of great faith.** The Jewish writer of Hebrews 11 asked readers to revisit and remember their ancestors, Abraham, Moses and Noah. We, too can do the same. Some of us have parents or grandparents whose Christian faith inspires us. Here at KCC, someone had the great idea of honoring seniors who were examples of faith on July 28, 2019. Photographs were taken, plaques were made, lei were given. I still remember then Moderator Dean Wakuzawa speaking about Jiggs Tamashiro. Doing construction on this very building at the beginning without knowing how the church would come to be, is faith. It is in these moments of acting on our faith that we encounter God and experience life! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

**Sometimes, faith requires leaving and letting go of the past.** It was difficult for Abraham to hear God calling him to leave his home not knowing where he was going. This takes faith. Have you ever made a decision to embark on a journey not know where you were going? It could have been God speaking to us. When we are seeking the Lord’s will, God may be calling us to some task, some place or some vocation, the specifics that aren’t known. Today, August 7, 2022, God asks you to have faith by letting go of Kailua Christian Church’s recent past. You don’t know what lies ahead. But if you have faith right now, you will experience the goodness of God. The hymn “trust and obey” comes to mind... “for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.”

**Women of faith are just as important as Men of faith.** We may know Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in reference to God’s covenant to Abraham. But the writer of Hebrews 11 elevates the faith of Sarah to that of Abraham. This may remind us of Title IX and the late Patsy Mink who strove for equality that included women. For KCC, there are women who are examples of faith. In my mind, I recall Nancy Arakaki as “the salt of the earth” and also “a prayer warrior” who served as chaplain in the Pastoral Search Committee. There’s Susan Morita as a trustee asking someone to make repairs to the men’s restroom donating their labor. Kammy Grable continued to involve you with outreach programs during Covid. And Debbie Fong inspired others with a children’s ministry on Sunday mornings.

**Conclusion.** It is when we have faith, we encounter God. But it takes work, it takes time, it takes commitment. When we have faith, it means we have to trust the Lord. In the midst of having faith, we begin to experience the goodness of God. Doug Tom was a Boeing engineer when he attended the Seattle church I was serving. On the day he retired, he decided to take up T'ai-Chi again at my Waipahu UCC church. He inspired me because he practiced every morning while watching my video. He has faith as I mentor him that one day he will be leading others and teaching them about this art. There's something we may be doing regularly that can be called faith. We believe that one day, it will happen. Or maybe there is something you have to have faith about or someone you should have faith in. Yes, faith is: The assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

### **Pastoral Prayer:**

God of Kailua Christian Church UCC, we give thanks for those who have gone before us for their ministry inspires us. We include those who have answered your call to serve during this present time, another 'interim' or 'in-between' period. Continue with Moderator Paul Grable and those who serve on the Council as decisions are made and the work of the ministry continues. We especially give thanks for Dennis Fong's ministry as the church clerk.

God of Kailua Christian Church, we give thanks for those who make this worship service possible each week both in person and on Zoom. There is a deep appreciation for Aaron Tanaka, Alan Yoneshige and Barney Pilla. We include those who help as ushers such as Pat Chinn and Jennie Lee as well as Vernon Pang and other deacons who enable us to celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We are especially appreciative of those who contribute to the altar flowers as well as making sure the sanctuary is clean each week for worship.

God of our congregation that includes members and friends, we lift up the requests for prayer. We include those listed in the monthly Waves of Faith newsletter and also unspoken prayer requests. Help those with medical challenges to grow in their faith. We give thanks for the ministry of Myra Yamada whose compassion for those with cancer is remarkable. May your Holy Spirit bring comfort to those who grieve the loss of family or friends. Be with those going through difficult transitions. May each person experience of peace of Christ.

God of Hawaii, we give thanks for administrators, teachers, and students as school began this week for the Department of Education. Help teachers and those who provide assistance in the classroom to prepare lessons and establish relationship with their students. Help students learn the material and also make friends and get involved with their school in meaningful ways. We pray especially for those who face challenges at home, at work or in school.

God of America, we give thanks for the freedoms we have living in the best country in the world. We pray for those who live in areas of great challenge where there are floods and

wildfires and mass shootings. We give thanks for churches throughout our nation that in some way are reaching out to help those in crisis and need.

God of the World, we give thanks for the diversity of nations, cultures and peoples that populate the earth. We pray for peace because of war and conflict which causes death and hardships. We pray for the health of all, especially with the various viruses.

God of KCC, we give thanks also for visitors, for friends, and for those who experience this worship. We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, Amen.

Sharing from Jo-Ann Komori –

*Kailua Christian Church was built on faith. Irene Kanetake discovered the property, and Jiggs Tamashiro was the general contractor. I remember the ladies sharing stories about those days. One story involved their husbands going immediately after work to help with construction to take advantage of the daylight. They also spent their Saturdays working to build the church.*

*Those were difficult times, but they were filled with many fond memories. It really was like an Acts 2 church because the families ate dinners together- nothing fancy but everyone just bringing whatever they had. I'll bet everything tasted good-- Vienna Sausage, shoyu hot dogs, etc. One lady (I wish I could remember who) said she'd bring her children to the construction site because one of the husbands would cut their hair. In those days the character of God was revealed to them in so many ways, and the people's faith grew. The struggles and sacrifices drew everyone closer. While the parents worked, the children played together and they became close friends.*

*Kailua Christian Church has gone through many struggles over the years, but the church has a solid foundation built on faith. The history of Kailua Christian Church glorifies God. This modest and humble church has a heart for outreach. Miraculously, there is always something extra to provide for others.*

*Kailua Christian Church is a symbol of God's faith. God will not let the people down as they search for a permanent pastor.*

*To God be the Glory,  
Jo-Ann*