

Sermon: “**Looking Ahead to 2026: Don’t Worry about Anything**” by Pastor Chris Eng
Texts: Philippians 4: 6 - 7; Romans 8: 26 - 28, N.R.S.V.
First Sunday After Christmas, December 28, 2025
Kailua Christian Church UCC

Introduction: in just 4 days, we will welcome the New Year of 2026. Many of us look forward to ways we have embraced December 31st as it transitions into January 1st. Some churches have a candlelight service at midnight. Here in Hawaii, the level of noise of fireworks increases when the clock strikes 12. Asian families may consume a bowl of hot soup with noodles assuring longevity. Those who love to dance and possibly imbibe alcohol will find their way to a nightclub or a hotel that has a special venue for New Year’s Eve. Often we may gather as families and friends but there are those who actually enjoy a solitary evening reading a book, watching an old movie or even retiring early. I would like to invite you to look at two of the Apostle Paul’s incredible verses from Philippians and Roman about prayer for December 31st.

It is natural to be anxious about something in our lives as this year of 2025 draws to its conclusion. Some can be quite open about this while others remain silent. From our finances to our health, from relationships to the work we do, from our passions and addictions, the list goes on and on. Paul writes, “*Do not worry about anything but in everything by prayer and supplications with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*” (Philippians 4: 6) Prayer is so essential to having faith. We need to articulate what it is that we’re worried about and in advance thank the Lord for hearing us. What God promises is not necessarily a response to our requests but peace. God’s peace goes beyond our understanding. That is why we may wonder why someone who is really going through a tough time seems to be doing all right. God’s gift of peace helps us to accept why we’re anxious and the need to let go of our anxiety and trust in the Lord!

2. **Another problem is that we may not know how to pray.** Many of us ask God to fulfill our prayer requests that reflect what we wish for. What we need to do when we pray is to confess to God that sometimes we are at a loss as to what to pray for. Paul comes to the rescue in Romans 8: 26 as he writes, “*the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.*” In other words, when we are at a loss for words because the situation or circumstances for which we are praying for seem overwhelming, the Spirit will pray on our behalf. We often talk about wanting to know God’s will for our lives. Verse 27 reveals that “*the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.*” (the Oxford English dictionary defines saint as a very good, patient and unselfish person (besides those venerated by the church). Simply ask the Lord for the Spirit to help us right now!

Conclusion: It seems all too easy to believe that “*all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose*” (Romans 8:28) but it’s true. We simply have to have faith that no matter what is happening right now that the last thing we should be doing is worrying about it. We pray and God gives us Peace. And when we don’t know how to pray, God’s Spirit prays for us. There are people here at Kailua Christian Church who may worry but know that if they do, then they know they need to pray. As leaders are installed next Sunday, give thanks for those who are willing to serve the Lord. It may be God’s will for you to volunteer to serve and be involved in Christ’s ministry in 2026!

*P.S. What is the process that allows us to grow in faith? I believe it is in discipleship. Each person who accepts Christ needs to be mentored in the faith. We see this in the secular world where young people learn a trade or a profession or an art. This is how we learn anything.