

## Puna Hongwanji Mission



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## January 2021 Hi-Lites

*Happy New Year!*



### **2021 Honpa Hongwanji Theme & Slogan**

**Building Healthy Sanghas**

*(Nurturing Empathy and Respect)*

### **Puna Hongwanji Vision Statement**

Puna Hongwanji Mission will be a dynamic and unique temple for Hawaii serving the spiritual needs of the community through Jodo-Shinshu teachings.

### **Puna Hongwanji Mission Statement**

Puna Hongwanji Mission is a community of people joined in the joy of a common faith in Amida Buddha to share the Dharma in our daily living.



## *The Hi-Lites Monthly Newsletter*

The Hi-Lites is published monthly by the Puna Hongwanji Mission. The articles and opinions expressed by the editors and individual contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of Puna Hongwanji Mission.

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## *With Deepest Sympathy*



Puna Hongwanji Mission extends its sincerest sympathy and condolences to the family and relatives of the following member(s) who recently passed away

*Rosie Tatsuta*

*Irene Takahara*

## *Memorial Service (Nenki)*

Families, relatives, and friends of deceased members listed, please contact the temple if there are any corrections or omissions. Researched and compiled by Reverend Satoshi Tomioka.



**\*\*\*Memorial services in-person is permitted following health guidelines.**

**\*\*\*Online memorial service is also available.**

**\*\*\*Please contact Rev. Tomioka for more information.**

### **January 2021**

1 yr.	None	2020
3 yrs.	None	2019
7 yrs.	None	2015
13 yrs.	Hatsue Oshita	January 8, 2009
	Tsugiko Uchida	January 13, 2009
	Michael Sakamoto	January 14, 2009
	Yoshiaki Imai	January 16, 2009
	Kiyoko Fujimoto	January 28, 2009
17 yrs.	Kazue Aito	January 1, 2005
	Minoru Furukado	January 20, 2005
	Clarence Hirae	January 28, 2005
25 yrs.	None	1997
33 yrs.	None	1989
50 yrs.	Yozo Sakaki	January 10, 1972
	Motome Tanaka	January 19, 1972
	Sueko Niimi	January 21, 1972
	Takatsuchi Yanazaki	January 22, 1972



## **Ethics Statement**

1. While photographing subjects in public places without permission is legally acceptable, we maintain sensitivity towards “camera shy” subjects and those that request photo ID anonymity.
2. We always seek permission when photographing subjects in private places (residences, care homes, etc.).
3. We provide appropriate photo credits of public domain, online or copyright material.
4. We provide appropriate and accurate context documentation when publishing all photos.
5. We strive to be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.
6. We do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events by staged photos.
7. We insure that edited photos maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context and not mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
8. We strive to follow normal sensibilities and the highest ethical standards in all our reporting efforts.

The articles and opinions expressed by the editors and individual contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of Puna Hongwanji Mission.

Give us your feedback and suggestions

Sam Horiuchi  
Tammy Molina  
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## **BISHOP'S NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE**

### **Nurtured by Amida Buddha's Light of Wisdom and Compassion**

Our Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Theme & Slogan for 2021 is “Building Healthy Sanghas: Nurturing Empathy and Respect.” It is a timely slogan especially as we begin a new year. When we take a moment to reflect on the situation of our nation and our society with the Coronavirus Pandemic, racial discrimination and even the climatic changes that are occurring on a global scale, it is not hard to see what our world needs is more respect and empathy.

The Larger Sutra provides wise counsel “*People in the world...should truly respect and love each other, refraining from hatred and envy. They should share things with others, refraining from greed and miserliness. They should always be friendly in speech and expression, refraining from quarrel and dispute.*” Unfortunately, it laments, “*...people in the world...do not believe that performing good deeds brings good results, or that seeking the Way leads them to attaining it.*”

However, all is not lost in that the Great Compassionate Light of Amida Buddha illuminates, nurtures and unconditionally embraces the spiritually foolish being who cannot completely break free from blind passions and attain enlightenment on one's own. In the Larger Sutra it says “*Sentient beings who encounter this light have the three defilements swept away, and they become soft and gentle in body and mind. They leap and dance with joy, and the good mind arises in them. When those suffering pain and travail in the three evil realms see this light, they all find respite and become free of afflictions. After their lives have ended, they will all gain emancipation.*”

Thus, I believe, the late Jodo Shinshu Scholar Rev. Jitsuen Kakehashi was able to say, *“When we look at the world with an ordinary mind, it is distinctly divided into things we love and things we hate, but with the mind of the Tathagata, we are made to know that everyone is equally the Tathagata’s indispensably important child. From that standpoint, we realize that we are all brothers and sisters and fellow human beings. Then slowly but steadily, we come to reflect on our self-centered thoughts, reject our blind passions and make efforts to see things and live our lives in a way that can be approved by the Tathagata.”* In this way, thanks to the Working of Other Power, we begin to slowly live in a new awareness and are assured the attainment of Enlightenment at the end of this finite life with our birth in the Pure Land.

His Eminence Gomonsu Kojun Ohtani says, *“By listening to the Primal Vow and how it was established by Amida Tathagata, we are enabled to become conscious of our own ignorance and self-oriented inclinations, and through such awareness, we naturally become gentle in word and deed in our efforts of minimizing our egoistic way of thinking.”* *“Even though our efforts may pale in comparison to the Buddha’s Compassion, we are at least guided in the proper direction by the Buddha Dharma.”* Let us take to heart his words.

To conclude, I would like to share His Eminence’s “Our Pledge.” The original was written in Japanese and his expressed wish was that it be translated by each locale in a way that would resonate with the people of that region. Thus, this is Hawaii’s Version (which can also be sung as it has also been put to music by BJ Soriano). In a few short verses, it captures the essence of a healthy Hongwanji Sangha which recites the Nembutsu in awareness, joy and gratitude of Great Wisdom and Compassion, and emphasizes respect and empathy.

#### Our Pledge

Reaching out to others,  
I will share a smile and gentle words.  
Just like the Buddha, who always  
calls out with Aloha.

Breaking away from my greed, anger  
and ignorance,

I will try to live in peace and  
harmony.

Just like the Buddha, who shares  
tranquility and kindness with all.

Moving forward from self-  
centeredness,

I will share a life of joy and sorrow  
with others.

Just like the Buddha, whose caring  
heart always embraces us.

Realizing that I live because of  
others,

I will strive to live life to the fullest  
with an attitude of gratitude.

Just like the Buddha, who promises  
to embrace us all.

Thank you, Happy New Year and Namō  
Amida Butsu.



### Minister’s Message

Aloha Kākou,

Happy New Year /  
And  
Hau’oli Makahiki  
Hou!

2020 passed and now  
we welcomed the year of  
2021. Thank you very  
much for everything in the  
past year and let us go to  
the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha for guidance,  
every day, every moment.



Every time when I welcome a new year, a story  
comes to my mind. That is a story of *Ikkyū*. *Ikkyū* is  
a zen master and the story goes in this way. In the  
morning of the new year, people happily and  
joyfully greet each other saying “Happy new year!”

People smile and feel so excited welcoming a new year. People send best wishes to each other and children play along the street. All are in the mood of happiness thinking and wishing for the bright and wonderful year. In that happy atmosphere, however, one man's presence changed everything. The man was Master *Ikkyu*. It is said he walked around the town saying "The New Year (or Decorative pine trees) are a milestone on the journey toward death; they are both happy and unhappy", and to our surprise, holding a cane with a skull. We can imagine how people felt and reacted to his presence and words. All the people said "How come you talked about death on this happy occasion?" "Don't say such a thing" and "don't bring and show a skull on New Year's Day! It may bring bad luck for us." Listening to the people, Master *Ikkyu* continued to walk and say the phrase again and again.

What was Master *Ikkyu*'s intention? Master *Ikkyu* reminds us of the truth of impermanence and living a life every day to the fullest. New Year's day is the dawn of "New Year" and one year is accumulated to each person's life. In other words, people are getting closer to death. Therefore, Master *Ikkyu* said New Year's Day is the day of happiness and unhappiness and taught people the truth of impermanence and the preciousness of each moment.

On New Year's Day in 2020, who imagined the COVID-19 and its impacts we had gone through? As the truth and result of causes & effects, anything can happen to our lives regardless of our wishes and desires. As a truth of life, impermanence teaches us nothing should be taken for granted and try to cherish everything we will have in this life. Sometimes, we realize the importance of things after losing them. It will be great if we can realize that importance while we have it. In *Tannisho*-A record in Lament of Divergences said:

"Further, having no thought of wanting to go to the Pure Land quickly, we think forlornly that we may die even when we become slightly ill; this also is the action of blind passions. It is hard for us to abandon this old home of pain, where we have been transmigrating for innumerable *kalpas* down to the present, and we feel no longing for the Pure Land of peace, where we have yet to be born. Truly, how powerful our blind passions are!

But though we feel reluctant to part from this world, at the moment our karmic bonds to this *Saha* world run out and helplessly we die, we shall go to that land. Amida pities especially the person who has no thought of wanting to go to the Pure Land quickly. Reflecting on this, we feel the great Vow of great compassion to be all the more trustworthy and realize that our birth is settled." (Collected Works of Shinran p.666)

A person who awakens to Buddha Wish and in that embrace, whatever happens in their lives, they are never alone. They are forever embraced and the person receives the joy of being embraced. In Amida's Embrace, our lives have a home to return when our lives come to an end. That is Pure Land. Death is not the end. It is a birth into the Pure Land to become a Buddha and meet with our loved ones again in the same place with the most beautiful appearance transcending our human calculated mind. Let us welcome the new year and live our lives to the fullest guided by Amida Buddha's Compassion and Wisdom. Let us find spiritual foundation in Namo Amida Butsu which has been calling to each of us, "take refuge in me, Amida!" and as expression of oneness with Amida and as a response, we say, Namo Amida Butsu. In Amida's embrace, we were never alone, we are never alone, we will never be alone. Life is difficult and goes as we plan, yet life is grateful with Amida buddha.



## Puna Hongwanji Kyodan Highlights

Synopsis of Kyodan Board of Directors' Online Meeting held on Thursday, November 19, 2020. Minutes were recorded by Marilyn Sato, Secretary.

### Repair and Maintenance

- Cracked walkway areas will be looked at to prevent trip hazards
- A middle school student wants to pressure wash the temple grounds
- The 3-door freezer was inspected. If the leak can be found and repaired, then we do not need to buy a new one.



## Approved Activities/Announcements

- COVID-19 is still with us. Please stay safe and happy. Thank you for your support and please support each other. Afterall, we are interdependent.
- Online events include classes (Tuesdays at 7:00 pm & Fridays at 6:00 pm) and services (Sundays at 9:00 am, Mondays at 7:00 pm, & Wednesdays at 7:00 pm).
- Membership Chair Roy Toma said dues reminder notices were sent out and he got responses from 22 members.
- Welcome new members Crystal & Sheena Cathcart
- October activities included costume contest (18 entries) and fruit & vegetable carving (16 entries). Drive by Halloween event had 10 tents and many families were happy and appreciative.
- Rev. Tomioka visited members in Hilo, Keaau, Pahoa, Kurtistown, and Mt. View during Halloween week. Thank you to drivers Robin Sato, Clifford & Keri Furukado.
- November Challenge is to send out hand written letters/cards; goal is 200 by end of the month
- December activity may include a holiday drive thru
- Project Dana volunteers and clients received masks from Big Island Coordinator Claudia Uyeda.
- Carol Tsunazumi said the Mask Committee is now the Mask & Scrub Caps Committee. They donated 130 masks for the Halloween drive thru which were given out by BWA.
- The PHM Hot Meal Project is pau for now. They prepared meals for six months with two (four?) meals per month.
- Taste of Puna Hongwanji Drive Thru is open to members only. Thank you to committee members Robin Sato, Jason Hashimoto, Clifford Furukado, and Rev. Tomioka.

- Taiko has resumed practice – doing it outside as much as possible. New recruitment may happen in January.
- Nomination Committee encouraged the Board of Directors to remain as is with the exception of the president (term limit).
- Dec. 20: General Membership Meeting on Zoom and in the social hall. Agenda includes 2021 Budget and election of officers.
- Dec. 21-28: Rev. Tomioka will be on vacation. Rev. Kawagoe will be in charge.

## In Appreciation – Thank You Very Much

- Thank you to Jason Hashimoto for leading Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Temple the past four years. Nomination Committee Chair Gordon Heit said, “He has done a fantastic job in this pandemic.” Please continue to share your knowledge and expertise and support our new president. Doomo Arigato Gozaimasu!
- Thank you to the various temple organizations and affiliates, a new camera was purchased by Rev. Tomioka. Mahalo nui loa! Thank you, thank you, thank you!
- Thank you to the temple organizations and affiliates for an enjoyable Halloween event. There were many smiles, thank you’s, and happy faces in the cars. Good Work! Awesome Job! A few cars requested a repeat performance next October.
- There is no end to saying **THANK YOU** to Clifford Furukado and his food crew for the amazing hot meals they prepared for six months. The project should have ended months ago, but they felt your appreciation and gratitude and continued on. We are blessed to have all of you in our Sangha.
- Thank you to members and friends who made dues donations and donations to the temple. Mahalo nui loa!

## Membership Committee News

Happy New Year! Thank you for your dues & generous donations. If possible whenever you send a donation in, please send a separate check for dues, kinen-kifu, columbarium, & special services to help the treasurers balance the various donations.

And if you are head of household and in a care home situation, your dues are exempt. Please let the office or myself know.

Also, if you have a change of address, we need to know too.

Stay safe & wear your mask.



In Gassho,  
Roy Toma  
Membership Chairman  
808-935-7712



## PROJECT DANA



The State Project Dana distributed masks to each unit for the volunteers and the Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition donated masks for the clients. The masks will be given to the volunteers and clients at a safe and appropriate time.



During this time of the Covid 19 pandemic, Project Dana is undertaking a "How You Stay"? Activity. Claudia Uyeda, Big Island Coordinator, delivered a supply of postcards, notecards and postage stamps to start this project. This is an effort to reach out to seniors, who may be feeling lonely and isolated. Site coordinators, Eileen and Stella, distributed cards and stamps to available volunteers, who were assigned clients. If a client prefers a friendly phone call, arrangements can be made with a volunteer. Hopefully, there will be contact made at least once a month. The volunteers are asked to keep a record of their calls and correspondence. This information is sent to the headquarters by the site coordinators. The data is necessary for future grant applications.

Puna Project Dana congratulates one of the clients, Ayako Margaret Yu, who became a centenarian this year.

### **HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY, AYAKO!**

In gassho,  
Eileen Usagawa and Stella Miyashiro.



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### **November Letter Writing Activity:**

Thank you to all of you that took the letter writing challenge and took the time to write to someone you wouldn't normally write too. The simple task was to handwrite a letter, put a stamp on the envelope, and mail it away to someone. Many of us text or send emails, but we wanted to have something more personal so requested a handwritten letter. In two weeks, our goal was to send out 200 letters. Thank you to all the participants that took the challenge. We exceeded our goal with 225 letters. It's heartwarming to hear from the writers how they enjoyed the project and to hear from the recipients how they appreciated receiving the letter. People that have not kept in touch with each other have connected to others with this project. Thank you to everyone that participated.

### **December Christmas-By 2020:**

Since the Halloween drive-by was a success we decided to try out a Christmas Drive-By. Thank you to the Puna Taiko, Puna Hongwanji BWA, Puna Hongwanji Sr. YBA, Puna Hongwanji Monday Dharma Friends, Sigrid (Sato) Lopez, and the Kyodan for taking the time to decorate tents for our event. Each tent was very creative with their decorations. Having the Puna Taiko pre-sale their andagi was also a great way to attract more people to our drive-by event. We contemplated if we needed to cancel the event since the forecast was for 100% rain and the days before the downpour was heavy. Saturday started off to be an okay day with off and on rain. During the set-up it was a challenge to decorate as the rain made it a little more difficult, but everyone pushed through and preserved. During the event we were truly blessed with beautiful weather from 5:00 p.m. to right before 8:00 p.m. During the clean up we were handed another challenge to clean up with the rain. Because the grounds were so wet we had to change our route and use the main entrance as the in and out. We didn't let that dampen our spirits and just decided to do what was best for everyone involved.

We were very fortunate to have Mark Yamanaka play during the drive-by for 3 hours. We got to enjoy and listen his wonderful voice. We are very appreciative of Mark for sharing his talent and time with us. Thank you to his parents Melvin and Della Yamanaka also as it was his mother that shared the idea of having Mark participate in the drive-by. Mark dedicated his wedding song that he created for his wedding to Rev. Tomioka and Haruka, "Our First Dance". Thanks to technology Rev. Tomioka had Haruka on his phone so they were able to virtually dance their first dance since their wedding. Mahalo Mark for making this event and even better night with your talent.

We hope if you were able to stop by that you enjoyed the event.

Have a Happy New Year.





## Christmas Activities:

We had two activities in December. We requested that people take a photo of their "Ugly Christmas Sweater" and Gingerbread House. We realized that many people in Hawaii really don't have "Ugly Christmas Sweater" as the photos submitted would not win in a real "Ugly Christmas Sweater" contest. Thank you to Jenn Kurohara and her friends for all the wonderful prizes that were donated for these activities. Everyone that participated had their names entered into a random drawing. Our winners were:

"Ugly Christmas Sweater" - 1st Place: Leo and Lenny Saito - \$50 Macy's gift card; Carol Tsunezumi - Yeti Tumbler; and Stella Miyashiro - \$25 Hilo Bay Cafe gift card. Rev. Kerry Kiyohara and his wife Mimy Kiyohara, Makawao Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, were the actual 1st place winners. Rev. Kiyohara had indicated if they were the winners that they wanted the prize to go to the next person. Thank you Rev. Kiyohara and Mrs. Kiyohara for your participation and sharing the prize with the next person.

Gingerbread House - 1st Place: Serena Watarida - \$50 KTA gift card; Crystal Maya Cathcart - Yeti Tumbler; and Marilyn Sato - \$25 Seaside Restaurant gift card

If you think of any other activities we should consider please notify Jenn Kurohara, Paul Sakamoto, Rev. Tomioka, or Robin Sato with your ideas. We know in 2021 we will still not be able to go back to normal, but we would like to share activities for all of you to do.







Puna Hongwanji Dharma School



Special guest



Puna Hongwanji Kyodan



Puna Hongwanji BWA



Mark, Melvin and Della Yamanaka



Puna Hongwanji Sr. YBA



Misaki, Mark, Jenn, Robin.

