

## Puna Hongwanji Mission



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# December 2021 Hi-Lites

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Online donation:

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### **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

*Yoriyuki Kano*

*Irene Kohara*

*Marion Morimoto-Shigeta*

## *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.**

### **\*\*\*Addition to November 2021\*\*\***

<b>Toshio Nakamura</b>	<b>November 10, 2019</b>
<b>Richard Oshiro</b>	<b>November 15, 2019</b>

### **December 2021**

1 yr.	Anne Yanazaki	December 11, 2020
3 yrs.	Iwao Takaki	December 2, 2019
	Yutaka Shimasaki	December 12, 2019
	Tsuneyoshi Matsumoto	December 27, 2019
7 yrs.	Sueko Arakaki	December 2, 2015
	Douglas Sakoda	December 10, 2015
13 yrs.	Richard Imai	December 13, 2019
	Sadayoshi Yamamoto	December 23, 2009
17 yrs.	Rufino Buendia	December 18, 2005
25 yrs.	Yutayo Hara	December 7, 1997
	Asako Yamaguchi	December 13, 1997
33 yrs.	Hisashi Tahara	December 13, 1989
50 yrs.	Kama Isa	December 17, 1972





## **Minister's Message**

### **Embrace**

In Buddhism custom, *Joya no kane*, the traditional bell-ringing ceremony is held on New Year's Eve. Usually, a bell is rung 108 times, which number symbolizes human desires. By ringing the bell, earthly desires are driven away one by one and we welcome the New Year with pure mind. In Jodo Shinshu tradition, however, the meaning of the ringing bells is not to drive away our desires. Unfortunately, our desires never disappear and it shows its nature anytime and anywhere when things don't go as we wish or as we want even on New Year's Day! Therefore, ringing the bells is to be aware of desires, reflect upon ourselves, and rededicate ourselves to entrust to Amida Buddha's Primal Vow which promised to save all as they are who have desires. Touched by Amida Buddha's compassion and wisdom, we are made to realize our self-centered mind and try to live our life in Amida's vigorous embrace. At Puna Hongwanji, we plan to have a temple bell ringing ceremony right after the service (9 a.m.) on New Year's eve. Please join us!

How was this year and how do you observe yourself? In our personal life and as a society, we have been through so many things like COVID-19, separation, health issues, family & human relationship, and other things that give us a hard time. Of course, there was joy and happiness too but the point is how do we reflect upon ourselves? If we measure and examine our life through the point of could / couldn't, did / didn't, was / wasn't, what would our answer be? If you had a plan to go to Las Vegas but couldn't make it, we would feel sad and not good. Or if you were able to attend the graduation ceremony of your loved ones, we would feel good. In this way, if we calculate the feelings of each experience like points, and if the total points are high we would say this year was good. And we would say no if the points are low. We examine ourselves based on the idea of benefiting me or not. In other words, we see things and put a label based on our convenience and distinctive mind. We would think it is bad that we couldn't go to Las Vegas but if a severe cluster of COVID-19 happens in the hotel where you were going to stay, we would say glad I didn't go. In this way, our perception changes based on self-centered views. Health declining, financial problems, headache of human relationships and things that give us a hard time are considered negative and bad. And this led us to think that oh, life is not fair and so difficult.

Here, we find the significance and importance of Buddhism. The Buddha's view is based on whether True & real or not. Buddha's Wisdom is the insight to see things fairly as it is without judgmental mind. The declining health of myself and that of loved ones is hard to accept and deal with. With human view, being healthy is good and illness is bad. Shakyamuni Buddha revealed the truth of impermanence. Everything is changing. Nothing and nobody can remain forever as it is, including our health. So, instead of lamenting the fact of being sick and labeling it as bad, through Buddha's Wisdom, we are made aware of the truth of life and understand that this is the unwavering reality and truth of myself. However, it is not easy to accept the reality as it is harsh and gives us pains and struggles.

Therefore, Amida Buddha is the Buddha of Wisdom AND Compassion. Our human life is truly beautiful and at the same time full of bittersweet. Observing our tears, pains and difficulties of life, Amida Buddha promised to save all from suffering and bring the utmost bliss to all. That is the compassionate calling voice of: “Whatever happens in your life, I shall embrace you as you are. I shall never ever let you go alone.” When we realize that I’m in someone’s embrace and never abandoned, we will find comfort and assurance. I had to admit that since the COVID-19, I was overwhelmed by the conditions, changes, tremendous work and I was burned out and was stressed out. One day, I totally lost myself and was in despair. It was like water was overflowing. Things were beyond my capacity and I was not able to handle it. I was in darkness, tears flew down, and I was lost. That was the time my spouse, Haruka noticed and came to embrace me. I said no, no, I can’t do it anymore. She continued to embrace me but I tried to escape from her. But she didn’t let me go and held me saying, “It’s okay, I’m here. I will never let you go alone.” I still tried to resist but gradually, I let myself be in her embrace and found comfort. Although the reality had not changed, but her embracer gave me inner comfort which sustains my life and guided me to stand up again. I also appreciate members who offered their support, encouragement, and advice. Shinran Shonin, the founder of Jodo Shinshu tradition says,

“Seeing the sentient beings of the nembutsu throughout the worlds, countless as particles, in the ten quarters, the Buddha grasps and never abandons them, and therefore is named “Amida”.”

Grasps (sesshu): Once grasped, one is never abandoned. Setsu means to pursue and grasp the one who seeks to run away. Setsu means to take in; shu means to receive and embrace.

Amida Buddha vowed to embrace all as they are no matter what struggles and pains a person has. With the highest virtue and vigorous compassion, Amida Buddha reaches out to us and hugs us. Touched by the transcending wisdom, we are enabled to see our human true nature and lead us to listen to the words of Amida Buddha which is calling and commanding us “take refuge in me, Amida!”

As we welcome the end of the year and through the ringing of bells, let us be aware that Amida Buddha was there with me when we had difficulties, and Amida Buddha is with me anytime, and Amida Buddha will be with me no matter what. Life is difficult but life is beautiful when we encounter Amida Buddha’s compassionate calling voice of Namo Amida Butsu. And Namo Amida Butsu comes out from our mouth with awareness that I’m in Buddha’s embrace. Let us joyfully recite the Nembutsu together. Namo Amida Butsu.

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### **Puna Hongwanji Kyodan Highlights**



Synopsis of Kyodan Board of Directors’ Online Meeting held on Thursday, October 21, 2021.  
Minutes were recorded by Marilyn Sato, Secretary.

#### **Repair and Maintenance**

- Tobans are doing weekly clean ups.

#### **Approved Activities/Announcements**

- Pandemic has been going on for almost two years. Puna Hongwanji Buddhist Temple continues to offer Sunday Services and activities – temple is still operating.
- There was no Halloween drive thru this year but online activities were offered – Costume (8 entries), Vegetable & Fruit Carving (5 entries), and the Vine of Harmony. Committee also visited a classroom at Pahoa Elem. School with goody bags.

- We have loss of fellowship, no bon dance, no bazaar, no socials, no in-person events, etc. If you feel concerned, worried, and/or overwhelmed, seek help. Do not hesitate to ask for help or guidance.
- At State Board of Director's Meeting, it was decided that the next Giseikai will be virtual and the Annual Aloha Luncheon will be canceled. The Bishop Selection Committee has been formed with Jerry Tamamoto from Kauai as chairperson.
- Ashley D'Ambrosio's piece on taiko was featured on Hiki No on PBS Hawaii. She is the granddaughter of Ethel Miyashiro and attends Kua O Ka La Public Charter School.
- Membership Chair Roy Toma has reached out to members who are delinquent with their dues donation. He would like to work something out with the members and/or family but only a few have contacted him. If you or someone you know is having difficulty, contact him. His contact information is in the Hi-Lites. A committee will be formed.
- Masks are an on-going project. As of October 2021, 95 years young Mrs. Mieko Nagao has sewn 2,000 masks.
- The Investment Committee reported assets are allocated as follows: 30% in medium risk and 70% in higher risk.
- Nov. 25: Thanksgiving Lunch take out
- Dec. 3: Big Island Buddhist Federation (BIBF) Bodhi Day on Zoom
- Dec. 11: Keaau Christmas Parade; drive thru event starting at 6:00 p.m.; cars, displays, and floats will be on two sides of street between the two traffic lights, town side of Keaau High School
- Dec. 18: Sr. YBA Year-End Party (online)
- Dec. 19: PHM Bodhi Day Service (online)

#### **In Appreciation – Thank You Very Much**

- Mahalo to Mrs. Mieko Nagao, 95 years young, for your incredible can-do attitude and for sewing 2,000 masks. Domo arigato gozaimasu!
- Thank you again to those who have made their dues donation. You are appreciated.
- Thank you to President Clifford Furukado and the Kitchen Crew for baking anpan for the Outdoor Winter Craft Fair and for preparing our Thanksgiving lunch. Fantastic! Amazing group!

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### **Membership Committee News**

Thank you for your continued support. Membership dues reminders have been sent. Dues can be paid weekly, monthly, quarterly or in full. If you are head of household and in a care home situation, your dues is exempt. And if you have a new mailing address, please let our office know.



In Gassho,

Roy Toma  
Membership Chairman  
808-935-7712



## Presidents Message

Hope you all had a great Thanksgiving. Time has really flown by and I can't believe that we are approaching the end of the year. Thankfully, it appears that we are slowly getting back to normal. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, Puna Hongwanji was able to sponsor an outdoor craft fair. Thank you to the organizing committee, Jen Kurohara, Robin Sato, Veronica Kitayama, Paul Sakamoto, Warren Tanigawa and Reverend Tomioka. The event featured 32 craft vendors and a number of food trucks. Puna Taiko sold their andagi, Dharma School sold drinks and the Kyodan had some anpan, spam musubi and bento for sale. Thank you to our members who helped with the set up and the hard working kitchen crew that prepared our food items for sale. Although it was a last minute thing since we had to wait for approval from the County, it was well attended.

Coming up via Zoom on December 5<sup>th</sup> is the Big Island Buddhist Federations Joint Bodhi Day Service. We will not be having service at Puna that day so please join in if you can. The guest speaker is Dr. George Tanabe, University of Hawaii Professor Emeritus in Religion. The zoom link can be found on our webpage. Another good sign that we are getting back to normal is that we will be resuming Sunday Service on December 19<sup>th</sup>. We will still need to follow the covid safety guidelines but at least we will be able to listen to Reverend Tomioka in person. That same day after service, we will be holding our annual General Membership meeting. The notice for the meeting is in this newsletter. Hope you will be able to attend.

Things are looking up as we end 2021, so I would like to wish you all a Happy and Safe Holiday Season.

In Gassho,  
Clifford Furukado

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Puna Hongwanji  
General Membership Meeting  
December 19, 2021  
10:30 am

Again this year, the meeting will be an online Zoom meeting. We encourage you to join us online however, if you do not have the capability, you can attend in person at the Temple Social Hall. If you want to join in via Zoom please inform Clifford Furukado or Reverend Tomioka. We will need your email address to send you the link.

You can email us at:  
[cfurukado@yahoo.com](mailto:cfurukado@yahoo.com)  
[stomioka@honpahi.org](mailto:stomioka@honpahi.org)

If you plan to attend at the temple you need to wear a mask and practice social distancing. On the Agenda we have the **Year End Reports** and we will be approving the 2022 Budget.

Thank you,  
Clifford Furukado

## **Distinguished Sangha Service Award**

The 2021 recipients of Puna Hongwanji 's Distinguished Sangha Service Award were honored at our recent Eitaikyo Sangha Memorial Service. Over the years, they have served our temple and continue to inspire us all.

CONGRATULATIONS and "MAHALO" "ARIGATO" for your many years of dedication to our temple. Your time, effort and guidance are greatly appreciated.



**Donald Shintaku**



**Satsuyo "Sats" Taira**



**Nancy Yamada**



**Jean Tanaka**

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### **Keaau Village Christmas Parade**

#### **Saturday, Dec. 11 from 6-7 pm**

PHM will again participate in this annual Christmas event. Last year it was a virtual event. This year it will be a drive through event and the theme is “*Back to Our Future*”. The parade route starts at the intersection of Hwy 130 and driving south on Kukula Street (the street is between Keaau High and Keaau village). Exit at the traffic light below Keaau Elem. The floats, bands and participants will be located on both sides of the street. Drive slowly and drive with caution. Keep moving and avoid stopping.

Each vehicle will be given a ballot to vote for your three favorite entries. Turn in your ballot at the end of the street. You may circle around to view the entries again.

Puna Taiko will also participate in this event



## BWA

The sewing of masks is an on going service project for the Puna BWA. Mieko Nagao has diligently sewn over 300 masks with love and skill. As long as there is a supply of material and elastic, she is willing to keep sewing. The masks have been donated to care facilities and recently distributed at the temple's craft fair. Masks will be included with the pick up meals for the temple's Thanksgiving Hot Meals Project. Each bagged mask has an inspirational message on a label, which Rev. Tomioka prepared.

The Puna on Wheels delivery for the Thanksgiving week will also include a mask with the bento. On November 19th, Carol Tsunezumi and Stella Miyashiro went to Keaau Elementary School. They donated 200 masks to the students, faculty, and staff members. The colorful masks were selected for their cute child oriented designs and themes. As long as the mask mandate is in place, the BWA will have masks available for temple members.





## PROJECT DANA

Congratulations to Clifford Furukado for receiving the CVS/Longs Drugs Caregiver of the Month Award, which is a \$500 gift card from CVS/Longs. This program started in 2008 when Project Dana and CVS/Longs partnered to select deserving caregivers on a monthly basis. Clifford's name was submitted for consideration by the Puna site coordinators, Eileen Usagawa and Stella Miyashiro. His volunteer service hours averaged 17 hours monthly for one client. Clifford provides transportation to doctors' appointments about three times a month. After the appointments, he takes the client for haircuts and grocery shopping. In addition, he does yard work to maintain the client's yard.



Claudia Uyeda, the Big Island Project Director, nominated Clifford for the month of November and he was selected as the Caregiver of the Month for his unselfish service. He is truly deserving and worthy of this recognition.

Starting the month of December, Claire Arakawa will be delivering weekly bentos to those who live in Pahoa. Project Dana will now service those who live in Keaau, Hilo, and Pahoa. If you would like to receive bentos or know of someone who would benefit from receiving bentos, please contact Stella or Eileen.

Thank you for your monetary donations. Please take care of yourself.



Happy Birthday to Carol Tsunezumi!



In Gassho,  
Eileen Usagawa and Stella Miyashiro

## OUTDOOR WINTER CRAFT FAIR

Aloha Everyone!

On Saturday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, we held our first Outdoor Winter Craft Fair. This was a greater undertaking than we imagined but thanks to the diligent and enthusiastic members of the craft fair committee: Reverend Tomioka, Robin, Warren, Paul, Cliff, and Ronnie, it is safe to say to call this event a success! All of the vendors are looking forward to the next one.

Except for a few-but-quick passing showers, it was a beautiful day. We had a few hundred people come through in intervals and, overall, everyone was patient and understanding. Especially regarding our one-way shopping pattern. The first 100 shoppers received a free mask, courtesy of the talented ladies of the Mask Committee, and were all pleasantly surprised! Thank you so much!

Mahalo to the County of Hawaii for approving our exemption request. Robin submitted our plan of action which not only secured the approval but made for a noticeable organized layout. Also, to the vendors who graciously agreed to do their own setup and breakdown and for providing proof of vaccination and negative test results. All of which helped provide an even safer shopping environment.

We received a good amount of monetary donations from shoppers and vendors totaling \$1399.67. No matter how much of a toll this “time of covid” has taken, the generosity and compassion shown by our community continues to shine.

Finally, to each one who came out to help, even in the days and weeks leading up to the event: Setup, takedown, cooking (lots of cooking – even for the volunteers), planning, and so much more! Our Sangha always comes through, and, on behalf of the committee, I extend my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude. Hope you were able to get some rest after!

Namo Amida Butsu  
Me ka mahalo piha,

Jenn  
Outdoor Winter Craft Chair and Events Committee Member



### **HALLOWEEN ACTIVITIES:**

Thank you to all the participants in our Halloween Activities for 2021. All those who participated in our Halloween Costume and Fruit/Vegetable Carving Contest received a \$20 gift card/certificate. Those who participated in the costume contest received a \$20 Macy's gift card donated by an anonymous donor. Those who participated in the carving contest received a \$20 gift certificate from Big Island Delights donated by the Puna Hongwanji Dharma School. Thank you to those that have participated and provided a pumpkin to put on our pumpkin patch. The pumpkins are on the wall entering the social hall. Rev. Tomioka, Jenn Kurohara, and Robin Sato went to visit the pre-kindergarten students of Kumu Kali's class at Pahoa Elementary School. Kumu Kali's 10 students were all dressed in their Halloween costumes. We were each given a ti-leaf lei and each student introduced themselves and told us who they were dressed up as. We left them with a KTA recycled bag and inside each bag it was filled with goodies donated by the Puna Hongwanji Dharma School and Jenn. The students sang "5 Little Pumpkins" and then a Mahalo song for us. We decided instead of hosting another drive-by Halloween activity we would go into the community and visit the schools. Pahoa Elementary School was receptive to our invitation, thank you Principal Michelle Payne-Arakaki.

### **CLASSES:**

The Hawaii District Minister Association will host the last session for 2021. Rev. Tatsuo Muneto, Retired Minister of Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, will discuss, "Living with Wisdom and Resilience: Following the Footsteps of Nembutsu Practicers on the Big Island." The session will be on Saturday, December 11, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. If you have attended previous seminars you are already registered for this session. If you have not participated in previous seminars, please register at <https://forms.gle/bQToK62Pi6J2UoD78>. For more information check out our Puna Hongwanji website and our Facebook posts.

### **BODHI DAY:**

On Sunday, December 5, 2021 we will not have service online at Puna Hongwanji. We will be joining the Big Island Buddhist Federation (BIBF) Bodhi Day Service on Zoom at 9:00 a.m. There is no registration required as the Zoom link, meeting ID, and passcode has been given to us. The guest speaker for the BIBF Bodhi Day Service will be Dr. George Tanabe, University of Hawaii Professor Emeritus.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84914509094?pwd=WU5KblRXOTZCb1A0aVVBbmVoSGJqQT09>

Meeting ID: 849 1450 9094

Passcode: 590330

*From the Puna Hongwanji Events Committee have a happy and Safe holiday season. We thank you for your continued support as we think of different activities to host.*

From the Puna Hongwanji Temple Service group have a happy and safe holiday season. Thank you for tuning in each week to our Facebook and YouTube pages as Rev. Tomioka shares the Dharma with all of us. Thank you Rev. Tomioka for all you do to prepare for the services each week.



**Cute Category – Karen**  
Batman, Robin, and the Croakoo Frog



### Creative Category – Kevin and Chris

Kevin is fishing and caught a big fish



### Best Use of Recycled Materials Category – Kanoe

Boba Tea Recycled cardboard box and paper towel roll tube for the straw.



**Cute Category – Kanoe**

### Halloween Costume Contest 2021



**Spookiest Category – Stella**  
Witch of Waiakea Uka

### Halloween Costume Contest 2021



### Best Use of Recycled Materials Category – Aileen

Lego bricks out of cardboard boxes and plastic solo cups and spray painted blue and red.

### Halloween Fruit/Vegetable Carving Contest 2021



#### Spookies Category – Stella

Two-faced Jack. It was naturally rotting on the vine due to the rainy days. He has three eyes.



#### Creative Category – Stella

Avocado Imp-wears celery leaves for hair; has pepper horns; orange peel eyes with cranberries for pupils; carrot mouth w/ jagged teeth and his nose is his own stem.



#### Cute Category – Stella

Mr. Pipinola – sprouting roots for his hair; sweet peppers for his nose & eyebrows; cranberries for eyes; orange peel ears; carrot mouth; and celery leaves for mustache.



### Halloween Fruit/Vegetable Carving Contest 2021

#### Cute Category – Sumika and Ririka - Japan

Smiling pumpkins



### Halloween Fruit/Vegetable Carving Contest 2021

#### Most Organic Category – Masako

Head: Scared squash  
Hair: Kale  
Headband: Kohbu (scallion)  
Eyes: Cherry tomatoes w/ kale lashes  
Nose: Eggplant with long stem  
Mouth: Red Delicious apple slice



### Visit to Pahoa Elementary School



Thank you Kumu Kali, Mrs. Haili, Pre-Kindergarten class, Principal Michelle Payne-Arakaki for welcoming us to your classroom.



### Visit to Pahoa Elementary School



Thank you Kumu Kali, Mrs. Haili, Pre-Kindergarten class, Principal Michelle Payne-Arakaki for welcoming us to your classroom.

