
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF
CENTRAL UNION CHURCH AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE.

1 WHEREAS, in 1887, the Bethel Union Church and the Fort
2 Street Church merged to form Central Union Church, with its
3 first sanctuary located in 1892 where the Hawaii State Capitol
4 now stands; and

5
6 WHEREAS, evolving from organizations instrumental to the
7 culture, institutions, and history of post-contact Hawaii,
8 Central Union Church is symbolic of Hawaii's spiritual debt to
9 those who came to Hawaii from Boston nearly two hundred years
10 ago; and

11
12 WHEREAS, the first services in the church's present
13 location were held on December 4, 1892, with more than one
14 thousand in attendance; and

15
16 WHEREAS, an well known and respected American church
17 architect, Ralph Adams Cram, and Honolulu architects Emory and
18 Webb, who also designed significant buildings throughout
19 Honolulu including the Honpa Hongwanji Temple (1918) in Nuuanu,
20 the Hawaii Theatre (1922), and the Hawaii News Building (1929)
21 designed the present Sanctuary Building in a colonial revival
22 style to express the church's New England heritage; the spire
23 not only had the practical value of locating the church to every
24 visitor by land or sea, but also became a sacrament of hope of
25 hope pointing men to Heaven; Cram was noted for the many
26 beautiful churches in the northeastern United States; he was
27 persuaded to make the long trip to Honolulu to create just the
28 right design for the "Church in the Garden"; the design of the
29 Sanctuary Building in a Colonial Revival style was intended to
30 express the New England heritage; and



1 WHEREAS, dedicated on May 18, 1924, the beautiful sanctuary
2 contains much symbolism, with its ten French doors representing
3 the Ten Commandments and twelve interior columns symbolic of the
4 twelve apostles; Reverend Palmer chose the text "LOVE NEVER
5 FAILETH" to be inscribed in the chancel above the pulpit choir
6 and communion table;

7
8 WHEREAS, Central Union Church is commonly referred to as
9 the "Church in the Garden", characterized by large lawns and
10 various trees, the Great Lawn predates the churches acquisition
11 of the property in 1922 from the Dillingham family during its
12 ownership tenure from 1979 to 1922, and

13
14 WHEREAS, on October 16, 1928 Central Union Church Preschool
15 opened its doors for the first time with a group of fourteen
16 boys and girls whose parents paid \$6.00 a month to cover the
17 cost of supplies; the school was housed in the original
18 Dillingham residence then, and now; Central Union Church's
19 interest in, and support of, early childhood education in Hawaii
20 goes back to the 1980's when the acceptance of the constitution
21 for the Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Association took
22 place on May 21, 1895, and

23
24 WHEREAS, the years the Sanctuary has served many local
25 residents as a place of marriage and bereavement; in the early
26 1990's the beauty of the Sanctuary attracted Japanese visitors
27 wishing to celebrate a Christian wedding; six hundred Japanese
28 weddings a year are performed at the Church; and

29
30 WHEREAS, in the early 1920's Rev. Albert Palmer led the
31 congregation to the present 8.4 acre site which was purchased
32 from the family of one of Bethel's earliest members; it soon
33 became known as the Church of the Garden, for the spacious
34 beauty and serenity of its grounds and buildings; while minister
35 of the Church in the Garden there was a major plantation strike
36 involving the Japanese and Filipino workers on six plantations;
37 Palmer preached to his congregation about the strike proposing
38 that the workers should be respected and receive decent housing;
39 and therefore in 1985 rev. Palmer was named by the Japanese-
40 American community as one of the twenty-three persons worthy of
41 Kansha or enduring gratitude and appreciation, and

42
43 WHEREAS, the smaller Atherton Memorial Chapel was also
44 designed in the colonial revival style by Mark Potter of



1 Honolulu and completed in 1949 to provide a smaller, more
2 intimate chapel for services, ceremonies, and functions; and
3

4 WHEREAS, after the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor,
5 Central Union Church became a major evacuation center, becoming
6 the temporary source of food and shelter for three hundred
7 people; the vast lawn in front of the Sanctuary Building was
8 converted into victory gardens; and
9

10 WHEREAS, over the years through its outreach and services,
11 including the use of church grounds and facilities, Central
12 Union Church has been instrumental in the formation of the
13 Salvation Army, Palama Settlement, Punahou School, Mid-Pacific
14 Institute, Arcadia Retirement Home, La Pietra, Manoa Valley
15 Church, Makiki Church, and the First Chinese Church of Christ,
16 among others; and
17

18 WHEREAS, Central Union Church came to the aid of numerous
19 homeless individuals in 2006, who were evicted from Ala Moana
20 Park by providing shelter and hot meals on church grounds; and
21 continues to provide meals, shelter, and clothing to fourteen
22 homeless families in the church's Family Promise program; now,
23 therefore,
24

25 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
26 Twenty-fourth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
27 Session of 2007, the Senate concurring, that the Legislature
28 recognizes not only the historical and architectural
29 significance of Central Union Church, but also the significant
30 contribution that Central Union Church has made to all residents
31 of the State from the late 1800s through its present day
32 community service programs; and
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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
35 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Senior Interim
36 Minister and the Co-Administrators of Central Union Church.
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OFFERED BY:

Celine W. P. Chung
Colleen May

MAR 14 2007

