



Senior Pastor Candidate Packet

A Church in the City, for the City



Aloha, grace, and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about City Church Honolulu. We have prepared this packet to help you come to know our story, our congregation, our city, and the kind of pastor we are prayerfully seeking for this next season of ministry.

City Church is a congregation marked by deep gratitude for the Lord's faithfulness and an honest awareness of our need for his grace. Our story holds much to be thankful for — the faithful preaching of the gospel, warm hospitality, a love for our city, and a diverse community. It also holds difficult seasons, including the recent and difficult departure of our pastor, that have called us to humility and renewed dependence on Christ.

As you read, we hope you will see a church that longs to be shaped by the Word, strengthened in prayer, nourished by the sacraments, and sent in love to Honolulu. We are praying for a shepherd who will love Christ, preach the gospel faithfully, care for our people wisely, and help us move forward with humility, clarity, and hope.

We are praying for you as you discern the Lord's call, and we ask that you pray for us as well.

In Christ,

The Session and Pastoral Search Committee

City Church Honolulu

The Session

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Mel Mow (emeritus)

Pastor Search Committee

Kenny Lee (Chair)

Mark Lyons (Co-Chair)

Judy Dill

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The History of City Church Honolulu

City Church Honolulu has always carried a particular calling: to proclaim the gospel of Christ in word and deed to Honolulu. From its earliest days, we have sought to hold together rich historic orthodoxy, warm hospitality, and a sincere love for the city. This history offers a brief look at the seasons God has led us through, from our planting years to our current season of prayerful transition.

Early Years

1997 - 2010



*Pastor Andy
& Alli Lee*

In 1997, a young pastor sensed God's call to come to Hawai'i and plant a PCA church in the heart of Honolulu. **Pastor Andy Lee** longed to see the power of the gospel take deeper root in our city. Honolulu already had many churches, but City Church was formed to be one where the transformative power of the gospel moved in the local, casual, multiethnic culture of Hawai'i.

This combination of local and multiethnic was visible from the beginning: a thoughtful liturgy prayed and sung by people gathered in shorts and rubber slippers, followed by potluck lunches filled with Okinawan, Portuguese, Filipino, and Hawaiian foods. In Hawai'i, food is essential to the community. These early gatherings formed a long-term vision of our desire to love God and others well.

Our first formal worship service was held on Easter Sunday in 1998 with approximately twenty people. Even in that first small meeting, the church reflected the diversity of Honolulu. There were local residents alongside recent arrivals from the mainland and overseas, young and old, highly educated professionals and blue-collar workers, longtime churchgoers and people still wrestling with faith. That diversity became part of the DNA of City Church, rooted in the conviction that the gospel brings us together.

In 2010, Andy chose to leave the pastorate to reenter the business world. Pastor Andy left the church with a strong foundation of sound gospel teaching, love for one another, outreach to the city, and a diverse community.

City Church's first worship team | Pastor Andy & Alli Lee share a meal with members | City Church beach day



Middle Years

2011 - 2019



*Pastor Paul
& Cindi Schuler*

In 2011 City Church welcomed **Pastor Paul Schuler** and his family. Paul arrived from California with his wife, Cindi, and the three youngest of their eight children. Paul and Cindi brought a natural gift of hospitality that shaped us in a lasting way. Their home was open and welcoming. Weekly groups met there for Bible study, fellowship, and shared meals. Those who needed temporary housing often stayed in their home and became part of their family for a time.

Their hospitality also helped deepen the church's heart for outreach. Because we were located near a Honolulu housing project with many Micronesian families, the Schulers started a Bible club there. Each week, church volunteers went to serve supper, get to know the children, play games, and teach them about Jesus. The ministry became known as the Parachute Club because the children loved to play a game with a white parachute.

Out of that outreach, Grateful Ministries was conceived and grew to serve the Micronesian people in Honolulu and on the island of Kosrae in Micronesia. During these years, the church also began sharing lunch every Sunday after the worship service. There were beach baptisms, youth camps, and a growing sense of shared life together.

City Church also began sending and supporting missionaries during this season. Our first elder became a missionary to Thailand with ZOE International. We also supported John and Eunice Kim in their work in China. They returned to Hawai'i in 2014, joined City Church, and John began the RUF ministry at the University of Hawai'i.

Throughout Paul's pastorate, the church emphasized outreach and formation. Paul's shepherding helped many grow in their relationship with the Lord, and the open, gracious hospitality that he and Cindi modeled showed us how to care for one another.

In 2019, Paul sensed that his time at City Church was coming to an end and he moved back to California. Paul's warm and hospitable leadership formed us in love for one another and for the Lord. He modeled for us that church was about community and not the gifting of the pastor, so that after he left, attendance did not change dramatically. This posture served us well when COVID hit, and we learned how to be a community for each other in different ways.



Recent & Current Years

2020 - Present



*Pastor John
& Eunice Kim*



*Pastor Gary
& Lois Watanabe*

Not long after Pastor Paul resigned, we realized that our next pastor was already with us. **Pastor John Kim** was installed as our pastor in June 2020. Under John's leadership we added many new members, new programs and outreach ministries began to flourish, and the church was strengthened in vital ways. Several new ministries and rhythms helped shape and support our life together: gatherings for newcomers, community groups, and Life-on-Life discipleship practices.

In early 2025, Pastor John informed the elders that he was experiencing a season of personal spiritual struggle. John took a leave of absence and sought renewal and care. In March he decided that the best thing for him and the church was to resign. His departure has been marked by many emotions, and it has been a difficult season for us. Through it all, the Lord has sustained us.

In September 2025, City Church welcomed interim **Pastor Gary Watanabe** and his wife, Lois. They have faithfully and ably led the church during this transition. With the tireless work of the staff and the continued faithfulness of the congregation, we are experiencing God drawing us together in forgiveness, repentance, and healing.

City Church carries the feel of a smaller church family. We are welcoming, hospitable, and embracing. Now the congregation waits prayerfully, with eager anticipation, for God's provision of its next shepherd to lead and mature us.



Section 2:

Demographic Data

Congregational Snapshot *

- **150** congregants on Sunday mornings
- **125** communicant members
- **11** non-communicant members
- **5** mercy team leads
- **4** elders & elder emeritus
- **4** staff (2 full-time, 2 part-time)

Age Distribution **

- **6%** 18-25
- **35%** 26-40
- **19%** 41-55
- **23%** 56-70
- **18%** 70+

Membership Tenure **

- **45%** 10+ year members
- **25%** 1-5 year members

Congregational Engagement **

- **79%** in a small group



* Numbers are approximate in some cases

** Based on congregational survey with 87 respondents

Section 3:

Our Ministries

From the very beginning, life at City Church has been shaped by our people. Our ministries exist for a simple end: to help us know, love, and serve God, one another, our city, and world. Here is a picture of how that life takes shape week to week.

Sunday Worship: Each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. we gather for worship. Our service is historically rooted and unhurried — Scripture read, prayed, confessed, preached, sung, and the sacraments celebrated — yet it carries the casual warmth of the islands, where the congregation comes as they are, aloha shirts and slippers included.

Food on the Lanai: Following worship, the congregation lingers to share food together. This unhurried time is where much of our community is quietly built, and where newcomers most often find their first sense of belonging.

Community Groups: We believe disciples grow best in the context of ordinary, committed relationships, where the Word of God is worked out in the rhythms of daily life. Our Community Groups meet in homes across the island for shared meals, prayer, fellowship, and time in Scripture. Alongside these, men's and women's Bible studies offer further space to dig into the Word and grow together. Our people describe these groups as the relational lifeblood of the church, and we long to see them deepened with even richer discipleship dynamics.



Keiki, Youth & Young Adult Ministries: We seek to walk alongside parents as they raise their children in the way of the Lord. Little ones are welcome in worship, alongside a Keiki (children) Class during the sermon. Our junior high and high school students meet for Bible study and one-on-one discipleship, learning to treasure the gospel for themselves. As we receive young families and singles, investing further in our children, youth, and young-adult ministries is a high priority.

Mercy Team: Our Mercy Team helps meet tangible needs of people within and outside our community. They also help connect us to opportunities to serve. We're named City Church for a reason, and we desire to deepen our commitment to serving Honolulu.

College Ministry & RUF Hawai'i: The university has long been a mission field close to our hearts. We partner with Reformed University Fellowship (RUF) to reach students across Honolulu's college campuses. Many who first met Christ or deepened their faith as students have gone on to help build the life of our church.

Serving Honolulu: At the Kalihi Recovery Home, we assist with facility maintenance, landscaping, repairs, and improvement projects that help create a safe and welcoming environment for residents. A central focus of the ministry is sharing meals and spending time with residents, demonstrating the love of Christ through service, conversation, encouragement, and prayer, aiming to build meaningful relationships that support the recovery home's broader mission.

Missions & Global Partners: We are committed to seeing the gospel spread to the ends of the earth, and we support and pray for partners serving well beyond our shores, including:

- *Oahu Theological Seminary*
- *Zoe International (Thailand)*
- *MTW Australia*
- *MTW Taiwan*
- *Grateful Ministries (Kosrae)*
- *Trinity Center for World Missions*

Hospitality & Welcome: Hospitality has been part of City Church's DNA since its earliest gatherings, and it has only deepened through the years. Newcomer luncheons, an open posture toward visitors, and a congregation quick to talk story over a plate of food all reflect a church that wants everyone who walks through our doors to know that there is a place for them here.

Section 4:

Life in Honolulu

Hawai'i is one of the most unique states in the U.S. — a vibrant place full of rich history, culture, and beauty. It can truly feel like living in paradise, home to beautiful beaches and hiking trails coupled with a graceful way of living.

One reason Hawai'i is so unique is its tropical climate. The Hawaiian Islands are warm year-round and can be quite humid at times, with the rainy season typically occurring between January and April. The climate is influenced by northeast trade winds, creating distinct microclimates with significant rainfall variations over short distances, and the islands rarely experience extreme temperatures.

Hawai'i is consistently ranked among the healthiest states in the nation, frequently securing a spot in the top 10 due to its high life expectancy (roughly 81.9 years, the longest in the U.S.), low rates of chronic lower respiratory disease, and high levels of physical activity. The state also excels in health outcomes (ranked No. 1 in 2024), with low adult obesity rates and low levels of reported mental distress.



Another special aspect of Hawai'i is its diversity and local culture. Native Hawaiian culture has a strong influence, emphasizing a deep connection to 'āina (land), the spirit of aloha (love and compassion), and kuleana (community responsibility). Due to the influx of immigrants during the plantation era, Hawai'i is home to many ethnic groups, including Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Caucasian communities, among others. The result is a "potluck" of local culture, with Asian and Western influences blending with Hawaiian culture.

At its best, the various ethnicities become a beautiful and gracious melting pot of races, so much so that individuals from Hawai'i often identify themselves as kama'āina (local) rather than by a single ethnic group. Hawaiian Pidgin is commonly spoken. There is also a strong "auntie and uncle" culture, unique local cuisine, and a generally more casual style of attire. Life tends to be more laid-back, with a high value placed on family and community, often expressed through gathering together for food, fun, and conversation.

In some ways, Hawai'i is very similar to the continental U.S. (the mainland). But the local culture is different enough from the mainland that it is, in some ways, like living in another country. Newcomers — whether military personnel serving at the bases in Hawai'i or students attending colleges and universities in the islands — can sometimes feel this as culture shock. Hawai'i is typically a welcoming and generous place, but it is important for newcomers to recognize the cultural differences between Hawai'i and the mainland, and to have an attitude of respect, humility, and a willingness to learn. Pastors might do well to consider Hawai'i an overseas mission assignment, and to be ready for a period of adaptation to Hawai'i's culture.

Hawai'i has a median age of approximately 41 years, with a population aging faster than the U.S. average. As of 2024, residents aged 65 and older make up more than 22% of the population, while those under 18 account for roughly 21%. Hawai'i is predominantly Christian, with approximately 60% of the population identifying as Christian. About 20% identify as evangelical, 16% as Catholic, and 14% as Mainline Protestant.

Hawai'i's K–12 public school system is generally considered mixed in quality.

While it struggles with funding and lower test scores in some areas, it also includes several strong public schools. Private schools each have their own unique missions and curricula. Well-regarded schools include Punahou School, 'Iolani School, and Kamehameha Schools, as well as Christian schools such as Trinity Christian School — run by our sister church, Trinity Presbyterian Church, which provides PreK–8 education — and Hawaii Baptist Academy, which provides PreK–12 education.

Common activities in Hawai'i include ocean-related recreation such as surfing and swimming; sports like volleyball, football, soccer, and tennis; and gathering together to "talk story" and share potluck meals. In addition to outdoor recreation, Hawai'i has a thriving arts and cultural scene, including symphony performances, theater productions, and community festivals. Many residents travel outside Hawai'i, particularly to the West Coast, Las Vegas, and Japan, to escape "island fever," a colloquial term for the restlessness that can come from living on an island surrounded by water.

Hawai'i has the highest cost of living in the U.S., driven largely by housing, grocery, and energy costs that far exceed the national average. Housing is the largest expense, due to both limited inventory and high rental costs. The cost of living has forced many local families to leave the islands after being "priced out of paradise," contributing to Hawai'i's transient population.

As in many other cities, Honolulu's living costs also contribute to high rates of food insecurity. This crisis disproportionately impacts Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and families with children. Hawai'i also has the nation's highest rate of chronic homelessness. There are many community organizations working to help alleviate these problems

City Church Honolulu is located on the mokupuni (island) of O'ahu within the ahupua'a (Native Hawaiian land division) of Honolulu. The city of Honolulu, whose name translates to "sheltered harbor," is the largest city in Hawai'i, with a population of approximately 340,000. Honolulu includes a diverse array of neighborhoods, including the business and financial district of Downtown, the tourism hub of Waikīkī, and the lush residential valley of Nu'uuanu, where City Church gathers.



Section 5:

Our Hopes & Aspirations for the Future

As we pray about and plan for the next chapter, we want to be marked by several realities as a congregation. We are a church with real relational energy and warmth, and what we long for is the vision, structure, and care that will help channel that energy into deeper formation and mission. We don't expect our next pastor to do everything for us; we want him to equip us and send us to do the work God has prepared for us. We believe that our next leader will serve the church by helping us grow in several key areas.

1. Leadership

We want our pastor and leaders to have a genuine, living relationship with Christ marked by humility, repentance, obedience, compassion, and prayerful dependence. More than charisma or personality, we long for servant-hearted leadership that shepherds, protects, and cares for the church. We are asking for clear vision, direction, and communication, so that the energy already present among us is matched by the clarity that leads us forward. We want to raise up new elders, deacons, and lay leaders, so that their gifts flourish in our community.

2. Disciple-Making Culture

We desire to be a culture where making disciples is integrated into every aspect of our life. We have rich relational soil; what we long for is the discipleship structure to support it, so that the hospitality which brings people through our doors is matched by the formation that grows them into mature followers of Christ. As we abide in Christ and walk by the Spirit, we are changed through the truth of Scripture, authentic community, spiritual disciplines, prayer, and daily dependence on the Holy Spirit. We seek a pastor who will help us build clearer pathways for discipleship and deeper biblical training — especially for newer believers and seekers — and who will encourage us to embrace a missional mindset to help us become mature followers of Christ in all our callings.

3. Community

The welcoming spirit of City Church is one of our most precious strengths — a gospel hospitality, woven through our community groups, our shared meals, and our lanai conversations, that we are determined to protect and cultivate. We desire to be a church that not only receives newcomers warmly but moves them from Sunday connection into genuine belonging, while faithfully caring for those who have long called City Church home.

4. Missional Mindset

As disciples of Christ, we are called, equipped, and sent into the world to proclaim the gospel and demonstrate the kingdom of God in our daily lives. We confess that this is the part of our mission we feel most keenly as unfinished: our love for Honolulu is real, but our visible engagement with the city has not yet caught up to it. We long to become a church that turns its affection for this place into tangible witness, equipping and encouraging members to pursue opportunities to share the gospel and serve others in Christ's name.

5. Restoration & Unity

Our unity is rooted in what Christ has done for us. We are motivated to love one another by the grace, mercy, and reconciliation we have received through him. We come to this next chapter carrying both real hope and some unhealed places from a difficult season. We pursue forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace with one another as those who have themselves been forgiven and restored.



Section 6:

The Pastor We Are Seeking

The following qualities describe the kind of pastor we hope will help lead our congregation in faithfulness, maturity, unity, and mission in the years ahead.

Basic Qualifications

- Commitment and belief in reformed and covenantal theology
- 5 years of experience in pastoral ministry
- Ordained or able to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church in America
- Deep personal faith and commitment to personal growth
- Character that embodies the requirements of an Elder (1 Tim 3; Titus 1)
- Alignment with the vision, mission, and values of City Church Honolulu
- Able to thrive in and minister to a multicultural community and environment

Integration of the Word

We seek a pastor who loves the Word of God. He holds the Scripture in high regard in his own life and his mind and heart are regularly renewed by the truth of God. He expositors Scripture clearly and preaches from personal conviction and experience. The Gospel is core to his character, preaching, and leadership of the church. He recognizes the power of the Gospel to transform hearts and minds and creates a culture where the Gospel forms the center of who we are. His teaching deepens our understanding of reformed theology while being practical, relevant and applicable.

Leadership

We seek a pastor that has a clear vision and direction for the church and leads her diligently. He identifies, mentors, and raises up leaders that will help shepherd and care for the church. In humility, he recognizes that he cannot shepherd the church alone and, in wisdom, shares this responsibility and calling with his fellow elders. Together, they establish trusting relationships where they are able to love, encourage, and strengthen one another in their shared ministry. Like Christ, they demonstrate servant-hearted leadership that shepherds, protects, and cares for the church.

Missionally Minded

We seek a pastor who embraces the Great Commission as the vision of the church, to go out and make disciples. He creates and fosters a missional mindset for the church. He provides ministries and opportunities for members to minister through but also empowers members to create and pursue their own missional avenues. He supports those called to mission in our city, nation, and world and helps transform City Church into a place that makes its presence known in the community.

Shepherd's Heart

We seek a pastor with a deep and abiding love of the church and is called by God to lead, care, and protect it well. He is a servant of God and a steward of the people. He is authentic and relational, setting for us an example of a life of faith by walking humbly with God and living in dependence and submission to the Lord. He consoles, encourages, and comforts others with compassion, kindness, and tenderness. At the same time, when needed, he challenges and admonishes for our good. He also knows that the church does not expect perfection and will extend grace, patience, and understanding as we partner together as the body of Christ.

Disciple-Maker

We seek a pastor who sees the making of disciples as the mission of the church. In his own life he is being discipled as he recognizes his need for vulnerability, transparency, acceptance, and accountability. As pastor, he will likewise personally disciple leaders with the intent that they disciple others. He equips these disciples with the intention of lasting transformation that flows out into a missional mindset in their workplace, families, relationships, and communities. For the church to effectively make disciples, he provides the needed vision, commitment, and means.

Community Oriented

We seek a pastor who recognizes and appreciates that our community is our greatest strength. He grows this community bond through our shared identity with Christ. He knows and understands us and will lead and guide us forward. His heart is for the health of our church family and the flourishing of our relationships and our love for one another. He will foster and grow authentic, covenantal relationships. He demonstrates humility and sensitivity as he seeks to understand and appreciate the unique setting that is Hawai'i — its cultural diversity, tradition, and history. A missionary heart and experience working with diverse cultures and/or in missionary settings will help him integrate into the practices and rhythms of City Church and the Hawai'i culture.

Restorative / Reconciler / Healer

We seek a pastor who understands what we have experienced in this past year. He is able and willing to step into this period of transition, healing, and recovery. He is sensitive to the different ways individuals have been dealing with this and knows that there is still work that needs to be done to move the church towards greater relational, emotional, and spiritual health. He knows that having our former pastor and his family remain a part of our community is both an expression of the grace of God and an unexpected and unique opportunity for everyone involved. He is able to cast a vision, and articulate a path, for healing and reconciliation. He encourages and grows a community where we pursue forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace with one another. This unity and restoration overflows into the surrounding community, reflecting God's love and grace.

In this next season, we're asking our pastor to:

- **Feed us**, preaching Christ from the depth of Scripture with clarity, conviction, and application.
- **Steady us**, shepherding a hopeful but weary body with patience, gentleness, and presence.
- **Direct us**, giving clear, unifying vision to a congregation that is ready to follow.
- **Organize us**, matching the energy already in the body with structures.
- **Empower us**, raising up and caring for elders, deacons, and lay leaders.
- **Mature us**, building discipleship pathways that grow us into Christlikeness.
- **Welcome us**, protecting our hospitable culture while moving people from Sunday warmth to true belonging.
- **Steward us**, honoring our multicultural, multigenerational, Hawai'i-PCA identity.
- **Send us**, cultivating a missionary heart that carries our love outward to Honolulu.

Section 7:

How to Apply

If you sense the Lord may be calling you to explore this role, we are eager to hear from you.

Please prepare the following and send it to our Pastoral Search Committee:

- **A cover letter** introducing yourself, your family, and what draws you to City Church Honolulu.
- **A résumé or ministry CV**, including links to at least two recorded sermons.
- **A brief written response** to the questions below.

Questions for prospective candidates

1. *Tell us about your relationship with Christ and how the gospel shapes your daily life and ministry.*
2. *As you consider City Church, the city of Honolulu, and a call to Hawai'i, what about this opportunity resonates with your gifts and passions?*
3. *How has the Lord shaped your leadership, shepherding, and dependence on him through recent seasons of ministry?*
4. *Our congregation is warm and relationally strong, yet longing for clearer vision, discipleship structures, and a more outward posture toward our city. How would you help a church like ours channel that energy into formation and mission while protecting what it already does well?*
5. *Is there anything you would like us to know or understand about your situation as we process your candidacy?*

Submitting Your Materials

Please email all materials as PDFs to jobs@cchnl.org, using the naming format below:

- FirstnameLastname_CoverLetter
- FirstnameLastname_Resume
- FirstnameLastname_Questions

We are praying for you as you discern the Lord's call, and we ask that you pray for us as well. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.