



# ***pacific*** **connector**



Hawaii Pacific  
Baptist Convention

2023 • MAY JUNE

VOL 53 • ISSUE 3



# Building the Kingdom

## From the Interim Executive Director/Treasurer



Aloha  
HPBC family,

It's been a joy serving for five months now as your HPBC president and two months as the interim executive director. As

always, this issue of Pacific Connector will highlight the amazing things God is doing through Hawaii Pacific Baptist Churches. Let me start by sharing a few highlights I personally had these past four weeks.

During spring break, I brought my two younger kids with me to Oahu. I met pastors and church members at our Town Hall sessions regarding the search for our next executive director. Meanwhile, my kids had fun attending Connections Church's spring break outreach, organized by pastor David and Nancy Whitehead and run by their mission team from Green Acres Baptist Church in Texas (see page 8).

The following week I visited Maui and met with several pastors there, including lunch with Nick Love, the brand-new pastor of Valley Isle Fellowship (see page 15). The week after, I had lunch with another new pastor, Tim Elisaga, serving just down the

road from me at Ohana Church in Hilo (see page 15). Join me in welcoming these new ministers and others to our HPBC Ohana.

I've also heard great reports about Easter week events. Our church had a Good Friday youth and children's outreach, where for the first time since the pandemic, we rented a large inflatable slide, and saw several new families attend the event with us.

On May 6th, I'll be back in Oahu for the WMU annual meeting hosted at Mililani Baptist Church (see page 16). I'll bring my mother, who serves at Kaumana Drive Baptist Church, and look forward to seeing our many amazing HPBC women there.

As you read the following pages, I hope you are encouraged by what God is doing through Hawaii Pacific Baptist Churches and are inspired to respond to the call to enter the fields ready for harvest (Luke 10:2).

*Pastor John Endriss*  
*HPBC President/Interim Executive Director/Treasurer*



### About the Cover

A lei po'o (head lei) made at a lei po'o-making outreach event at Waiehu Community Church on Maui. Photo by Sarah Komatsu.



For more issues, scan the QR code above or visit:  
[hpbaptist.net/pacificconnector](http://hpbaptist.net/pacificconnector)

**Pacific Connector — 2042 Vancouver Dr, Honolulu HI 96822 • 808-946-9581**

**Assistant Executive Director, Editor:** Dr. Craig Webb • [craig@hpbaptist.net](mailto:craig@hpbaptist.net) • 808-946-9581

**Associate Editor:** Dawn Akutagawa • [dawn@hpbaptist.net](mailto:dawn@hpbaptist.net) • 808-946-9581

**Contributing Editor:** Brandon Pickett | **Designer:** Patti Spencer

**Contributing Writers:** Anita Bice, John Endriss, Brian Frable, Diana Ventura, Craig Webb

The Pacific Connector highlights people and churches that work to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ by reaching the Pacific and Asia. For information about Pacific Connector or the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention, email: [info@hpbaptist.net](mailto:info@hpbaptist.net) or call: (808) 946-9581 or write: Pacific Connector, Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention, 2042 Vancouver Drive, Honolulu HI 96822.

This publication is provided online free of charge and is available by visiting our website: [hpbaptist.net/pacificconnector](http://hpbaptist.net/pacificconnector).

Designed by Innovative Faith Resources, a non-profit media firm specializing in helping churches and non-profits with graphic design, video, branding, and financial services. Visit Innovative Faith Resources at: [innovativefaith.org](http://innovativefaith.org).

# Contents

## 11

### Fellowship Church Shows the Love of Christ

Boxes of food were given to residents of Kalihi Valley Homes, along with a presentation of the gospel and an invitation to the Jesus Revolution movie.



## 6

### Asian Baptist Network Leaders Conference

Reaching our "Jerusalem" for Christ.



## 13

### Deaf Camp Tennessee and Deaf Camp Hawaii

Deaf Camp Tennessee created a long-term partnership to hold a Deaf Camp in Hawaii.

## Something to Celebrate

### 8 Spotlight on Events

Events showing and telling the story of what God is doing in Hawaii and the Pacific islands

### 12 Hilo BCM Partners Renovate BCM Facilities

Renovation projects were accomplished through missions teams

### 14 Spotlight on People

Elders, deacons and pastors recognized. Kona Baptist licensed two for the gospel ministry.

## Departments

### 2 Building the Kingdom

Interim Executive Director's update

### 4 Executive Director Search Committee Update

Activities, discussion, and decisions by the search committee

### 16 WMU Missions Celebration

An in-person event for men and women



# Update

## from the HPBC Executive Director Search Committee

*by Brian Frable, committee chair and HPBC 2nd vice-president*

**T**he purpose of the HPBC Executive Director Search Committee is to bring glory to God by discerning His provision in His perfect timing for HPBC's next executive director-treasurer. The Committee, elected in the January Executive Board meeting, prayerfully began planning this process and will soon start the necessary steps toward seeing its completion.

Currently conducting extensive monthly meetings via Zoom, the committee's intent is to have in-person meetings during the final phases of the search. The Initial Road Map comprises five phases: praying, planning, gathering, reviewing, and determining.

As praying has been foundational, the committee began with helpful training from a former state convention executive director, conducting interviews of convention executive and support staff, and researching issues regarding a change in convention leadership affecting the local church.

With a strong desire to make this an open process, thus promoting confidence from HPBC churches, the committee conducted several Town Hall Meetings to hear directly from the churches. After reviewing the findings from these 'listening sessions' regarding the expectations of the next executive director, the committee is currently working to complete a number of practical steps, including a thorough review of the job description, developing an adequate applicant pool with credible referrals, and finalizing prudent screening and interviewing procedures for candidates. The committee expects to complete the planning phase in April and launch into the gathering phase in early May, being committed to sufficiently completing the planning process before gathering any applicants.

If there are any concerns, comments, or questions, contact the search committee at [HPBCExecSearch@gmail.com](mailto:HPBCExecSearch@gmail.com). Also, the committee invites earnest prayer for the process and for God's provision for the next executive director. The committee plans to coordinate a convention-wide day of prayer for all participating churches to ask the Lord's guiding hand to be upon this process.





**Pastor Brian Frable**  
**(Chair)** Kona Baptist,  
Hawaii Island



**Pastor Sterling Lee**  
First Baptist, Pearl  
City, Oahu



**Naomi Ashman**  
Olivet Baptist, Oahu



**Pastor John Endriss**  
HPBC President/Interim  
Executive Director/  
Treasurer



**Pastor Larry Hale**  
Ele'ele Baptist, Kauai



**Paula Higuchi**  
Kahului Baptist,  
Maui



**James Kinoshita**  
Olivet Baptist, Oahu

## HPBC Town Hall Meetings

During March, the HPBC Executive Director Search Committee conducted eight Town Hall meetings on four Hawaiian Islands, including the Big Island, Maui, Oahu, and Kauai. These listening sessions were an opportunity for the Search Committee to hear directly from concerned church members, leaders, and pastors about hiring the next executive director-treasurer.

The in-person meetings, hosted by seven different churches, were also an opportunity to address specific questions from those in attendance. The Search Committee also hosted a Zoom meeting with several Asia Baptist Network pastors and a luncheon meeting at the HPBC convention offices.

By the end of the month, many attendees from more than twenty-four different HPBC churches had voiced opinions regarding the next executive director-treasurer, including: what leadership qualities are most expected, anticipated character qualities, the relationship the executive director plays in serving the churches, and the greatest challenges for the churches of the HPBC in the days ahead.

Extensive notes were recorded for the Committee's use to make the most as they progress in the prayerful process of selecting the next director. The Committee chair, Brian Frable, continued to appeal for the church members of HPBC churches to pray daily at 8:08 am for God's provision in God's timing for the next executive director.



# Asia Baptist Network Leaders Conference

## Reach Our Jerusalem

Attendees were challenged to reach their communities for Christ.



(left, top) **Himeji Baptist, Japan**, brought twenty-five to the event. Toshikazu Haruta is pastor.

(left, bottom) Pastor Chris Eyre, **Koza Baptist, Okinawa**, hosted the event.

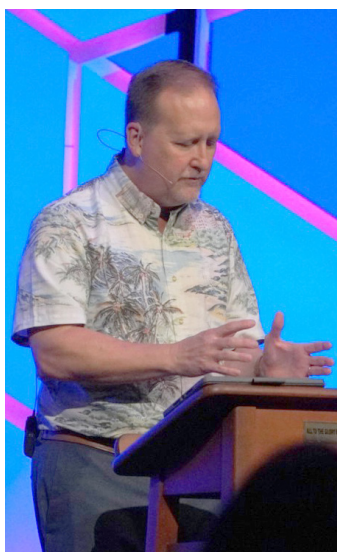


Pastor Takeshi and Miki Yozawa, **Tokyo Baptist Church**

The Asia Baptist Network Leaders Conference was held on March 21-23 at Koza Baptist Church in Okinawa. ABN Moderator and Koza Baptist senior pastor, Chris Eyre, planned and hosted the event.

The Asia Baptist Network (ABN) comprises of Hawaii Pacific Baptist Churches in Japan, South Korea, The Philippines, and Thailand. It has been since 2019 that they have been able to meet in person.

This year's event focused on the command of Jesus in Acts 1:8 to reach our "Jerusalem." Plenary session and breakout session speakers discussed "local missions" and challenged attendees to reach our communities for Christ.



Pastor Brad and Mihoko Boyd, and daughter Hiram, **Calvary Baptist, Okinawa**

**Freedom Village Church, Seoul, South Korea**, sent their staff and interns. Pastor James Lynch second from left.

Craig Webb, **HPBC** Assistant Executive Director, preached the final message of the conference.





## Hawaii Korean Pastors' Association Holds Revival



The Hawaii Korean Pastor's Association held revival services February 17-19 at the Korean Baptist Church of Hawaii. The theme of the revival, led by Pastor David (Seung Hee) Ko, was "Healing by the Word of God." Ko, senior pastor at Beautiful Church, Los Angeles, Ca., came with his church's praise and worship team.



(left) *The choir from New Community Baptist Church, Pastor Hwan Soo Chang*  
(right) *The worship team from Beautiful Church, Los Angeles, Ca.*

## Connections Church Kapolei Holds Spring Break Outreach



Connections Church Kapolei held a four-day Spring Break outreach called Adrenaline 'Eha. 'Eha is the Hawaiian word for "four." A missions team from Green Acres Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, provided support for the week. They were led by Associate Missions Pastor Jason Humphrey.



## Connections Church Kapolei Baptizes Five Adults

At a recent Connections Church Kapolei ocean baptism where four adults were being baptized, Pastor David Whitehead felt impressed to extend an invitation to the many surrounding people watching. He asked if anyone else wanted to say "yes" to Jesus and follow in believers' baptism. A young woman in the military from Washington state came forward and said she had professed Jesus as her Lord recently but hadn't been baptized due to frequent moves. Pastor David baptized her as well!





## Word of Truth Celebrates 25 Years of Ministry



On Sunday afternoon, April 2, 2023, Word of Truth celebrated its 25th anniversary as a church. The event was held at Ewa Beach Baptist. Word of Truth pastor Daniel Capinpin preached a message from James 1 on Joy. He

shared how God has continued to give him joy as he has endured a terminal cancer diagnosis for three years. Micah Camarata is the pastor of Ewa Beach Baptist.

## Himeji Holds Himeji Castle Park's 5th Outdoor Stage Ministry

Every year Himeji Baptist Church (HBC), Japan holds an outdoor worship service in front of the Himeji Castle (A UNESCO World Heritage Site). Spencer Rice, a missionary from Word Baptist Church in Arkansas, preached the gospel, and the HBC band led worship along with the youth dance team.



## Waiehu Christian Fellowship Holds Lei Po'o Event Easter Weekend

Waiehu hosted a Lei Po'o Workshop with the help of WMU on the Saturday before Easter. Our women were asked to bring an unbelieving friend to the event, and we encouraged all who came to wear their Lei Po'o the following day to our Easter Service. Po'o is the Hawaiian word for head. Lei Po'o is a lei worn on the head.



**Sue Nishikawa  
Offering**  
for Hawaii Pacific Missions

*This event was supported in part by your gifts through the Sue Nishikawa Offering for Hawaii Pacific Missions.*



## Guam Christian Life Fellowship Baptizes Three on Easter Sunday

GCLF and friends had their annual beach day after the associational SONrise service. They baptized three believers. Two were scheduled, but the third, seeing the significance of being obedient, asked if she, too, could be baptized. Pancho Madrid is the pastor.





## University Avenue Offers Journey Through Jerusalem

University Avenue Baptist Church on Oahu hosted 124 guests at Journey Through Jerusalem, a storytelling event that tells the Passion Week story through the eyes of townspeople in Jerusalem. The cast was made of multi-generational households, telling God's Story together over 11 different tours on Good Friday. Each tour group traveled through four scenes where they saw, heard, smelled, tasted, and touched their way through the Story of God's great love for us. As they traveled through the tour, guests received gifts to help them remember the Story, as well as a copy of the New

Testament. Dani Beth Crosby, Family & Communications Minister, said, "The Sue Nishikawa grant we received allowed us to dream up new ways to tell God's story and purchase the gifts we sent home with each guest." Shane Tanigawa is the pastor of UABC.



## Tokyo Baptist and Liberty University Students Reach Tokyo Together



Tokyo Baptist Church (TBC) partnered with Liberty University for two days of mission outreach in Tokyo on March 14 and 15. Fifteen Tokyo Baptist members participated, along with eleven Liberty University students and one faculty member.

On March 14, the combined teams prayer-walked and shared the gospel around Shibuya Station, only a 15-minute walk from TBC. On the morning of March 15, the teams ministered at a local community center in Kawasaki City. The team provided hand massages while serving drinks to people who came to the event. In the afternoon, they ministered at a senior citizens' nursing home. In both locations, they shared the gospel message, and the Liberty team sang praise songs. In two days, 90 people either engaged in gospel conversations or received gospel tracts and information about Tokyo Baptist. Takeshi Yozawa is the pastor of Tokyo Baptist, and Joel Kaminga is the evangelism and administrative pastor.

Pray for Tokyo Baptist's upcoming mission trip partnerships with Southcliff Baptist Church (TX) with International Mission Board (IMB), Tokyo, June 2023; Mililani Baptist Church (HI), August 2023; and Soldier Creek Baptist Church (OK), August 2023.



**Sue Nishikawa  
Offering**  
for Hawaii Pacific Missions

*This event was supported in part by your gifts through the Sue Nishikawa Offering for Hawaii Pacific Missions.*

## Hāmama Partners with Local Football Team

Hāmama Community Church is partnering with Hooligans, a local football team coached by Reynan, whose mission is for Christ to be at the center of their football team. They hosted a clinic over Spring Break, and over thirty kids attended. Each day FCA players and someone from Hāmama shared about Jesus.





## OBN Pastors Meet at Nu'uaniu Baptist for Fellowship and Discussion

Sixteen Oahu Baptist Network pastors and staff met for their monthly lunch and learn hosted at Nu'uaniu Baptist. They discussed how churches can work other and support each other. Thank you, Robert Miller, for your discussion leadership, for Bob and Gail Gierhart for hosting the lunch, and for OBN Moderator Bong Abagon and OBN for paying for lunch! HPBC Board 2nd VP Brian Frable (Pastor of Kona Baptist) flew over and joined in.



## John and Gay Williams Lead Disaster Relief and Chaplain Training on Oahu and Guam

University Avenue Baptist Church (UABC) on Oahu hosted Disaster Relief Chaplaincy training on March 10-11. Fourteen students attended this two-day course and trained in advanced spiritual care and operational stress first aid.

Guam Christian Life Fellowship (GCLF), in partnership with the Baptist Association of Micronesia (BAM), sponsored Disaster Relief training. Nineteen new volunteers learned about disaster preparedness personally and as a church. They were also trained in basic disaster relief, recovery, evangelism, and introduction to chaplaincy. GCLF also hosted Disaster Relief Chaplaincy training on April 13 and 15.



John Williams leads training at GCLF on Guam



Gay Williams leads chaplain training at UABC on Oahu

Hawaii Pacific Disaster Relief is part of the larger Southern Baptist Disaster Relief and SEND Relief network bringing help, hope, and healing anywhere in the world where there is need. These efforts could not be accomplished without

your love and support through prayer and generous giving through the Cooperative Program, Annie Armstrong, Lottie Moon, and Sue Nishikawa Offerings.

## Fellowship Church Shows the Love of Christ in Kalihi

Fellowship Church held its most recent food distribution on February 25. Thirty boxes of food were given to the residents of Kalihi Valley Homes. Before each monthly food giveaway, Pastor Harlan Nakasone presents the gospel and invites people to respond. At that food giveaway, the residents were also invited to the Jesus Revolution movie on February 26. We offered free transportation and free movie tickets. One family responded to their invitation!

The Fellowship Church Leadership Team is Pastor Harlan and Dana Nakasone, Curtis Tsuzaki, Manuel Albert, and Clyde Kakiuchi.



## Guam Christian Life Fellowship Launches New Tagalog Worship Service



GCLF sought to solve the need for more floor space as well as a more effective way of ministering to our growing primarily Tagalog-speaking congregation. On Sunday, March 12, 2023, the GCLF Tagalog Worship Service was inaugurated. Pancho Madrid is the pastor.



## Hilo BCM Partners Renovate BCM Facilities

By Hilo BCM director, Anita Bice

On March 2, a team of seven arrived from Tennessee with donations from friends and hearts to work. The team started out as one family with connections to Kinoole Baptist Church and Hilo Baptist Campus Ministries (Hilo BCM) director Anita Bice.

The Spain family: Gene & Stacey Spain and their daughters, eleven-year-old Mailynn and Atley, a senior at Boyce University in Kentucky. The Spains are members of Madison Heights Baptist Church in Madison, Tenn. They enlisted their friend Billy Whittinghill of Longhollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn. Billy brought his expertise as a contractor to the team. Billy's daughter Allie Whittinghill and her friend Abby Bacon, students at Lee University, also joined the team.

The missions team visited Puna Baptist Church while they were on the Big Island. Puna Baptist members Tom Nelson and Mike Delyria introduced themselves and volunteered to help. Mike retired from the flooring business and offered to help with new flooring. He spent the week after the team left installing new floors to replace badly worn flooring. Other projects included replacing the kitchen sinks and counters and painting. Missions team members and BCM students painted the kitchen, and members of Big Island churches provided meals for workers.



**HILO BCM**  
BAPTIST COLLEGIATE MINISTRIES

@HILOBCM | @HILOBCM | BCM.UHH@GMAIL.COM | 1409 KAPIOLANI ST. HILO, HI 96720



*Mainland Mission Team*



*Renovated Hilo BCM Kitchen*



*Ohana Church musicians practicing with BCM musicians on the new floors for an upcoming event on campus.*





## Deaf Camp Tennessee and Deaf Camp Hawaii

*By Deaf Camp Staff*

We believe that God opened the door for Deaf Camp Hawaii at the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board (TBMB) Annual Meeting when they announced that there was a partnership in the works between Tennessee Baptists and Hawaii Pacific Baptists.

We met with HPBC's Assistant Executive Director for ASSIST, Brian Smart, to discuss the possibility, and he helped us move it forward. He acknowledged there was nothing like Deaf Camp for deaf children in Hawaii. The desire was to develop a long-term partnership to hold a Deaf Camp in Hawaii for multiple years as we had done in Tennessee.

The Deaf Camp of Brentwood, Tennessee, is an all-summer day camp that has been growing and expanding for about 28 years. We realize the resource and wisdom gained, and we need to share this with others to expand The Deaf Camp.

The Deaf Camp is under The Deaf Church in Brentwood. Pastor Aric Randolph invited the pastors of Deaf Church Knoxville and Kirby Woods Baptist Deaf Church of Memphis to consider joining our efforts to take the Deaf Camp to Hawaii. These two churches joined the vision journey in September of 2022 and have since committed to this long-term partnership.

Grace Poei, a member of University Avenue Baptist Church, actively promoted the Deaf Camp to families in Hawaii. She worked closely with three local churches to provide nine huge meals and recruited volunteers to work at the camp.

Pastor Sterling Lee graciously offered First Baptist Church, Pearl City, as the site for Hawaii Deaf Camp. Fifteen children participated in the first Deaf Camp Hawaii from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., March 14–16, 2023. The plan is for the next Deaf Camp Hawaii to be held January 3–5, 2024.





## GracePoint Church Recognizes Elders and Deacons

GracePoint Church recognized and prayed over its elders, deacons, and their wives during both worship services on March 26, 2023. Although GracePoint Church's elders and deacons have been serving through the merge, they have not been publicly recognized. Much of that was due to the church discovering how elders and deacons would function practically in the life of GracePoint Church.

"The Gathering had elders, and Cornerstone had deacons," said James Shiroma, lead pastor of GracePoint Church. "It was all a matter of seeing how God was creating our roles

specifically for GracePoint." Shiroma said the church's elders and deacons exemplify unity, humility, love for each other, love for the church, and a commitment to growing as a gospel-centered church.

"Our elders and deacons are laying a foundation for the church as well for those who will become elders and deacons in the future," Shiroma said, "I love our elders, deacons, and their families. GracePoint Church is blessed to have them. Excited about our church and its future."



GracePoint deacons: James Au, Jeff Ramos (Lisa), Gary Soga (Donne), Randy Taketa (Phyllis). GracePoint elders: Mark Leoncio (Susan), Ross Morihara (Traci), Danny Morton (Tammi), and James Shiroma (Julie)

## Kona Baptist Licenses Slavens and Galvan for Gospel Ministry



Sunday, March 26, 2023: Kona Baptist Church licensed Dalton Slavens and Joshua Galvan to preach the gospel. Pastor Brian Frable brought the charge from 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, and the congregation affirmed by the laying on of hands and prayer of dedication. Both Josh and Dalton are available for pulpit supply.

left to right: Haley and Josh Galvan (with their baby girl, Charlie); Dalton and wife, Kristen Slavens; Pastor Brian Frable



## Valley Isle Fellowship Calls Nicolas Love as Senior Pastor

Nicholas Love began serving as the senior pastor of Valley Isle Fellowship, Maui on Sunday, April 2, 2023. He is originally from Michigan and has lived in Hawaii for over forty years. Nicholas has served as a youth pastor in Kaneohe and associate pastor on Maui. He serves as a Chaplain in the Air National Guard and works with a local nonprofit to fight human trafficking. His wife, Alexandra, is Hawaii-born and raised. They have three children.

## Kenneth Priest Completes One Year Transitional Pastorate

Kenneth & Debbi Priest were sent out from Valley Isle Fellowship (VIF) on Maui on Sunday, March 26, concluding a one-year transitional pastor time of service. The church celebrated its service with a potluck lunch following morning worship. Kenneth began his time with VIF in April 2022. During his time, the church baptized six and saw eight new members join the fellowship.



## Keamo to Pastor First Southern Baptist Church of Pearl Harbor

Alvin Keamo was called as pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Pearl Harbor on February 12, 2023, and will be installed on Sunday, May 7, 2023. Alvin has been serving as their associate pastor since October 24, 2021. Alvin's wife is Charlotte, and they have one daughter, Avlin. Pastor Alvin also works as an educational assistant at Aliamanu Elementary School.



## Tim Elisaga Called to Serve Ohana Church, Hilo

Tim Elisaga has been called to serve as Teaching and Vision Elder at Ohana Church in Hilo on Hawaii Island. Tim has been married to his wife, Janine, for 18 years. They have a 15-year-old son, Malachi, and a 13-year-old daughter, Tehya.



# WMU® Missions Celebration

In-person event for men and women

Join us for this year's WMU Missions Celebration. Worship with us as we hear from guest speakers and testimonies from missionaries and ministry leaders living intentionally and missionally-minded.

**Saturday, May 6, 2023**

**9 am - 3 pm - Lunch provided**

**Mililani Baptist Church, 94-293 Anania Dr, Mililani**

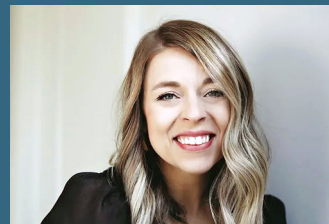
## Keynote Speaker



**Sandy Wisdom-Martin**  
WMU, National Executive Director

Sandy is a dynamic speaker who faithfully serves with humility and compassion. She is committed to following God's leading and sharing that true hope comes from Christ alone. "I do what I do because I believe in the restoration of brokenness through hope in Christ. Through WMU, we do what we do because Christ is risen and we must tell the good news."

## Special Guest Speaker



**Julie Busler**  
WMU, Oklahoma President

Julie is active in women's ministry as a speaker and author of "Joyful Sorrow: Breaking Through the Darkness of Mental Illness." She has served overseas in Canada, Mexico, Germany, and Turkey. She will be sharing her testimony and helping us understand how we can bring hope to those dealing with mental health.

For additional information, contact Diana Ventura,  
HPBC Director of Women's Ministry at [diana@hpbaptist.net](mailto:diana@hpbaptist.net)

To register, visit online at [tinyurl.com/WMU-May6reg](https://tinyurl.com/WMU-May6reg)  
or scan this QR code.



**Sue Nishikawa  
Offering**  
*for Hawaii Pacific Missions*