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## 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  
33

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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39

OFFERED BY:

*Celine W. P. Chung*  
*Colleen Meyer*

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