

**WAIKOLOA COMMUNITY CHURCH COUNCIL PLANS FOR EVENTUAL RESUMING
OF PHYSICAL EVENTS ON THE CHURCH PROPERTY**

Aloha,

As many different businesses and other organizations begin slow and careful reopening procedures around the Big Island, we have also been hard at work, researching, praying, and planning for our eventual resumption of onsite physical activities on our property. There are **MANY** things to carefully consider; first and foremost the safety of our congregation and other community members who would use our property and our facilities, especially the safety of our kupuna and others who are at higher risk. A large percentage of our church (and thus our volunteer workforce) and a large percentage of those accustomed to meeting in our facilities are in that high-risk age group.

Even though the Mayor has given the go-ahead for churches to “open” this weekend, at the writing of this letter, we are still awaiting some final guidance from the County of Hawai'i and State of Hawai'i for churches with respect to “gathering size” of groups. There are additional guidelines, as well as **substantial** legal and insurance concerns, and tremendous logistical needs when it comes to opening our facility to the **many other groups** who we have historically allowed to use our property and facilities.

A few of the things we are having to consider, plan and budget for, include **significant, ongoing sanitizing requirements** between **every group's meetings**, ensured **physical distancing** of all those groups gathering together on our property, ensured **mask-wearing** by all participants on our property, **adequate signage**, etc.

Obviously, mounting a team of enough volunteers and the amount of cleaning products and Personal Protective Equipment to safely sanitize the entire facility in-between each group throughout the day, seven days a week, is (as we are sure you can understand) a **daunting** task. In addition to the time needed to actually sanitize rooms, chairs, tables, and bathrooms **between each group**, CDC guidelines also recommend a minimum downtime between when groups conclude and cleaning crews enter and a span of downtime between when cleaning concludes and the next group begins. We do not anticipate being able to accommodate these **exceptional needs** for quite some time.

We are hopeful to resume (outside only - “no-touch”) **worship experiences sometime this summer**, once we are confident we can obtain a ready supply of cleaning equipment, sanitizing products, PPE, and volunteers. We do not yet have a definite time scheduled for resuming even our most basic church gatherings for the same reasons stated above. **However, resuming our church activities on our property and in our facilities is our first, and primary purpose.**

With all that in mind, at this time, we currently feel it will be at least the first of September - perhaps longer - before we can safely consider making our facilities available to outside groups again. Rather than continue to give you one month at a time delay notices as we have been doing, we are not choosing an arbitrary date at this time. Instead, we are writing today to let you know that we will NOT BE REOPENING the church facilities this week. We will notify you two weeks prior to the date we feel like we can safely and responsibly make our facilities available to you again. We do enjoy making our facilities available to community groups, and like many of you, we are anxious as well, for the day we can safely and responsibly do that again for all. However, we are unable to do all that is necessary to allow for that at this time.

The one exception we are making at this time is for humanitarian food, masks and supplies distributions which briefly use the church parking lot for quick drop-offs and pickups. For example, the Hawai'i Food Basket distributes produce to subscribers on Wednesday mornings. People also briefly gather for a quick, fresh produce drop-off on Tuesday and Friday mornings. Auntie Lorna and her team occasionally use the parking lot for brief Keiki Pack distributions. Finally, World Kitchen is currently continuing to serve dinners nightly with a drive-through, no-touch system where people stay in their cars and have food placed in their trunks. We will continue to allow these brief distribution activities to occur. However, no other groups or activities and no gatherings will be permitted on our property or in our facilities without the express written consent of the Waikoloa Community Church Council.

We understand how frustrating it is for the many community groups that have grown accustomed to using the Waikoloa Community Church facilities for your various classes, meetings, and support groups. It is our hope that we can, one day soon, begin to offer that service to everyone again. In the meantime, we have a tremendous responsibility to protect the safety of our church members as well as all others we welcome to our property. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work diligently to navigate this unique situation in the days ahead.

Aloha,

Pastor Greg Scott and President Knut Hovde
Waikoloa Community Church