

**Church of the Holy Apostles
Hilo, Hawai'i**

E Komo Mai & Our Unique Identity

E komo mai (welcome) to the Church of the Holy Apostles in Hilo, Hawai'i. We are grateful for your interest in our parish and the spiritual journey we share as disciples of Jesus Christ. This profile highlights who we are, what makes us unique, what we believe our purpose to be, and what we seek in our next Rector.

Our parish is located in the University district of Hilo, the county seat of the Island of Hawai'i. Our congregation hails from communities throughout East Hawai'i, with some parishioners driving nearly an hour each way to worship on Sunday morning.

Our Recent History and Context



Life in East Hawai'i presents unique challenges that have forged a spirit of resilience within our community. The 2018 Kilauea volcano eruption, which claimed homes and personally affected some of our parishioners, and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022) were severe tests of our resilience. These twin disasters, occurring so closely together, led to the development of a level of resilience and a sense of caring for one another that has strengthened our congregation and enhanced ecumenical collaboration among our local faith communities. (Please see our 2025 Parish Video below.)

Parish Profile Video (3:34): <https://youtu.be/lnDccul0idM>

- The Vestry of the Church of the Holy Apostles

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Our Unique Church Environment

The spirit of *aloha* infuses everything we do.

- **Our Open Doors–Literal and Symbolic:** During our services, the church doors are open – not just the main entry, but both sides of the nave – a literal reflection of the symbolic *E komo mai* (welcome) in a tropical environment
- **Four-Legged ‘Ohana:** We are a parish of animal lovers, and our services regularly include **our beloved pets**, who are considered regular members of our parish ‘ohana.
- **Barefoot Worship:** It is common and symbolic for our clergy (priests and deacons), as well as altar servers, to go **barefoot** in worship, connecting us spiritually and physically to the sacred ground of the sanctuary.
- **A High-and-Broad Blend:** Our worship is a blend of 'high' church reverence (bells and periodic incense) and family-style 'broad' church flexibility (heartfelt thanksgiving and prayer time, and a pragmatic approach to kneeling).



Music as an expression of faith: Our worship is elevated by a magnificent Steinway grand piano in the sanctuary and an organ in the choir loft. Music is a living and beloved expression of our faith.

- **A Sacred First:** Holy Apostles is working through the permitting process to install two free-standing columbaria, the first of their kind associated with an Episcopal parish on Hawai‘i Island.
- **Niche Ministries:** Every church has parishioners who make unique contributions. Holy Apostles has a small cadre of Altar Guild members who decorate beautifully and enthusiastically – not only each Sunday, but especially for feast days; one parishioner makes beautiful name plates for the plants gifted at Easter and Christmas; a group weaves ribbon lei to present to visitors; several

hobbyist farmers bring produce, as well as herb and flower seedlings to share; one parishioner has a birthday card ministry; another bakes bread for visitors. This is just a sampling of what makes Holy Apostles unique and special.

Looking Inward: Who We Are

We are an open community living God's love, grace, and reconciliation through Jesus Christ. We are dedicated to affirming the dignity of every human being and sharing God's love both inside and beyond the church walls.

Our parish reflects Hawaii's diverse backgrounds, with members from Hawaiian, Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, European, and Micronesian heritage. Our various ministry groups help forge lasting relationships, often extending beyond church events. Formation classes are sometimes offered, and we regularly support local charitable organizations, both through volunteering and financial contributions.

Our Core Values:

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| Welcome & Inclusion | We eagerly greet everyone and respect all beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of life. |
| Love & Fellowship | We express our love of God through love for others, sharing our <i>aloha</i> and strengthening the community ('Ohana). |
| Worship & Tradition | We praise God, pray together, partake in the sacraments, and embrace the Anglican Tripod of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. |
| Service | We seek to serve deeply and broadly in our parish and our community. |



Worship, 'Ohana, and Context

Liturgical Tradition and Worship (Worship Video: <http://bit.ly/3LftvOZ>)

Worship at Holy Apostles draws from Anglican foundations, uniquely colored by the spirit of Aloha. Our services blend the spirituality of ancient liturgy with active congregational participation. Traditional prayers, symbolic gestures, and sacred music are central to our services, inviting people of all ages and backgrounds to participate.

A Localized Experience We work to incorporate 'Ōlelo Hawai'i (Hawaiian language) and music throughout our liturgy, enriching the experience for all. We also mark significant holy days celebrated in the Episcopal Church of Hawai'i, including the **Feast of the Holy Sovereigns** (King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma), Queen Lili'uokalani's Birthday, and the feast days of Saints Damien and Marianne.

The Holy Apostles 'Ohana

As a parish, we are committed to being friendly and welcoming. We are a mostly aging and traditional, but very diverse and generous, Episcopal parish.

Rehabilitation and Partnership: With the generous support of our members, we have recently rehabilitated much of our church infrastructure, including restoring our roof, both interior and exterior painting, modernizing our sound and livestream systems, and fully renovating our parish hall. We have welcomed our new tenant and ministry



partner, **Neighborhood Place of Puna (NPP)**, whose mission is to help families move from housing instability to transitional and permanent housing. (Pictured are CHA and NPP leaders and the Mayor at the NPP blessing.)

Parish Ministries

- **‘Ohana:** Our fellowship is rooted in the Hawaiian concept of *‘Ohana*, or family, reflected in the strong bonds among members, especially during our notable “coffee hour” potlucks after Sunday services.
- **Lay Ministries:** We have active groups, including the Welcome/Greeters Team, Altar Guild, Acolytes, Lay Readers, Choir/Music Ministry, Lay Eucharistic Visitors, Christian Formation/Sunday School, Vestry, the Daughters of the King: Mary and Martha Chapter, and the Columbarium Committee.
- **Diocesan Involvement:** Despite being one of the most physically remote parishes from our Diocesan Seat in Honolulu, O‘ahu, Holy Apostles is actively involved in the Diocese of Hawai‘i, including providing members to several permanent committees of the Diocese.

Community Outreach: Our DNA

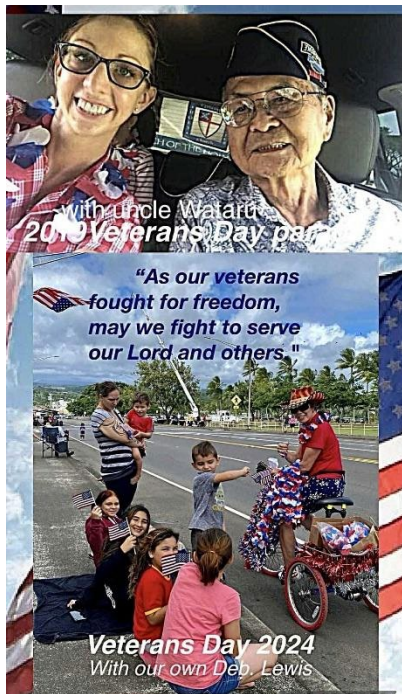
Community outreach and involvement are in Holy Apostles' DNA. Our congregation maintains a long history of actively engaging with and serving the needs of the wider Hilo community. Our service is often focused on honoring and caring for our **kūpuna** (treasured elders) and those experiencing instability.

Key Outreach Ministries

- **Peanut Butter Ministry:** Holy Apostles members join an interfaith team to prepare a meal for approximately 100 community members once a month.
- **Neighborhood Place of Puna (NPP):** We support our parish hall tenant, NPP, with financial and in-kind donations, as well as the families transitioning through the Hale ‘Iki Family Assessment Center. Additionally, several members provide trained spiritual support to the families they serve.
- **Disaster Relief:** Holy Apostles is a member of **Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)**, collaborating with local organizers to prepare for any disaster in our community.
- **Financial & In-Kind Support:** We maintain a **Rector’s Benevolence Fund** that helps folks in need through utility payments and food gift cards. We also support The Food Basket, Camp Mokuleia, the Diocese of Jerusalem, and local

substance abuse groups. We offer meeting space for various community groups on our church campus.

- **Community Visibility:** We proudly participate in the annual **Hilo Pride Parade** and the **Veterans Day Parade**.



Our Call to Grow & The Next Leader

What and Who Are We Called to Become?

We recognize our need for growth in specific areas to live out our mission more fully. While we believe we are “**LAY STRONG**,” we are called to build up and equip new and existing lay leaders to minister both in the church and in the community.

- **Deeper Connection:** We desire **small-group fellowship opportunities** outside church hours to foster a deeper sense of connection and belonging. This desire also manifests itself in a **call to congregational care**, in which we seek ways to involve all people.
- **Honest Growth Areas:** We see ministry to children, youth, and young adults as a key growth area for our parish. We currently have a very small group of youngsters. We are also interested in **reaching out to our University of Hawai‘i neighbors**, but have not yet made meaningful progress in this goal. We seek a leader who can help us realize these ministries.

Our Deacon’s Testimony

"My calling as a deacon is to serve as *he alahaka* – a bridge – between our church and the wider community... It is an honor to walk alongside our congregation as we embody Christ’s compassion and justice in this place. We seek to empower others to share in Christ’s ministry of presence and healing, helping us fulfill our baptismal promise to “seek and serve Christ in all persons.” In Hawai‘i, we say **mālama kekahi i kekahi** – let us care for one another. This is the heartbeat of our community."

"Sending forth Eucharistic Visitors and offering the Dismissal – “Go in peace to love and serve the Lord” – reminds us that our worship leads us out into the world, to be bearers of aloha wherever we go."

A Message to Our Next Rector

It is with open arms and open hearts that we welcome you. May our shared ministry reflect the aloha of Christ and the spirit of mālama that is the soul of these islands. As we journey together, may we nurture one another with compassion, honor our traditions, and embrace the new possibilities God sets before us. May our time together be filled with blessings, laughter, and mutual joy as we serve God’s people side by side. E komo mai – welcome! May God’s peace and aloha be with you always.

With gratitude and hope,
The Rev. Deacon Alberta Brown Buller

Who Will Lead Us?

We seek to call a Rector who will lead and collaborate with us on our journey and mission. We are looking for a leader who will:

- Accept who we are now and encourage us to become who we want and feel called to be.
 - Be comfortable with diversity of all kinds and embrace our multi-cultural community.
 - Teach and preach, weaving Scripture, Tradition, and Reason into formation.
 - Encourage all members to pursue leadership and service in the church.
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Parish History & Community Snapshot

Parish History

The Episcopal Church was invited to the Kingdom of Hawaii by King Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma in 1862, beginning in Honolulu. The parish we now know as Holy Apostles is the only Episcopal parish in Hilo, beginning as a mission in the early 1900s.

From its earliest days, the church building has been a hub for social service, housing a preschool for over 20 years and continuing that tradition today by leasing the parish hall to the Neighborhood Place of Puna. Services have always been multi-ethnic and, historically, have been conducted in English, Japanese, Korean, Ilokano, and **‘Ōlelo Hawai‘i**.

For a deep dive into our history, please visit our website: [Church of the Holy Apostles Website/History](#)

Community Information: Hilo, Hawai‘i

Holy Apostles is in Hilo on Hawai‘i Island. We reside in the most diverse county in the United States, an island home to two of the world’s great mountains, an active volcano, and 11 of the world’s 13 climate zones.

Geographic/Demographic Snapshot

Details (2024)

Diversity

(2024). 2020 Census breakdown: 32% European, **19% Asian** (Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, Korean), **13% Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders**, 11% Hispanic, and 23% reporting two or more races.

Economy

The State of Hawai‘i is the largest employer. Tourism and diversified agriculture (coffee, flowers) are significant industries.

Daily Life

Hilo is a historic “small town” with modern conveniences, known for its

Geographic/Demographic Snapshot

Details (2024)

pleasant year-round climate and unique events, such as the **Merrie Monarch Festival** (the “Super Bowl of Hula”).

Health Care

Hilo Benioff Medical Center (HBMC) is the largest medical facility on the Big Island.

For more information on our community, check out this link: [Hilo, Hawai'i](#)

2024 Parochial Report Summary

(Full Parochial Report data available upon request)

Contact Information

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