

January 27, 2026

Dear Faith 'Ohana,

Grace and peace to you in the name of the One who calls us to love mercy, seek justice, and walk humbly with God.

It is with a grieving heart that I write to you following the tragic deaths of Renee Good and Alex Pretti. Each of these beloved children of God leaves behind a constellation of family, friends, and communities who now carry the weight of loss and unanswered questions. We hold their names tenderly, trusting that God receives them with compassion and surrounds their loved ones with comfort deeper than words.

As the Body of Christ, we do not turn away from sorrow. We remember. We lament. And in the presence of God, we tell the truth about pain.

The deaths of Renee and Alex do not occur in isolation. They are part of a wider landscape of suffering in our nation marked by policies and practices that often deny dignity, fracture families, and amplify harm rather than healing.

During this time, we cannot ignore the broader climate of cruelty that has shaped national policy over a number of administrations and has left lasting wounds. As followers of Jesus, whose ministry centered the vulnerable, the excluded, and the oppressed, we are called to name what is unjust and harmful. Yet even as we speak the truth, we do so not from a place of partisanship, but from our rootedness in the Gospel and our commitment to God's vision of a world where all can flourish.

In moments such as these, we remember that lament is holy. Anger on behalf of the suffering is sacred. Compassion is courage. And the work of justice is an expression of our deepest hope. So I invite every congregation in the Hawai'i Conference to:

- **Pray for the families and friends of Renee Good and Alex Pretti.**
- **Create space for communal lament**, knowing that grief shared becomes grief held.
- **Stand with those harmed by systems of cruelty**, offering accompaniment, advocacy, and presence rooted in Christ-like love.
- **Continue the work of kingdom building**, not for political gain, but because the Gospel compels us to love our neighbors fiercely and without condition.

Beloved, God is near to the brokenhearted. God hears the cry of the afflicted. God strengthens the weary and binds up the wounds of those who mourn. May our Conference embody Christ's love with renewed courage and may God's healing presence surround us all.

Rev. Dr. David K. Popham,
Conference Minister