

**KAILUA CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 2024**  
**SERMON – THE COLOSSIANS 3 CHURCH COUNCIL**  
**SCRIPTURES: COLOSSIANS 3:12-17**  
**REV. IRENE WILLIS HASSAN**

**Colossians 3:12-17**

**12** Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13** Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

**15** Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16** Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. **17** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**Sermon: The Colossians 3 Church Council**

Today is a special day for our congregation as we install our new church officers. I know that some of you stepping into these leadership roles might be feeling a little nervous—and I don’t blame you! In fact, I think you *should* feel a little nervous. You’re stepping into a time of extraordinary movement and transformation in our church, and that carries weight.

We’re a church experiencing growth—spiritually, financially, and in the reach of our ministries. Over the past year, we’ve received several generous sums of money. Most of that money has been given over the last several weeks, actually, right at the critical moment of trying to decide what to do with finances that were about to bottom out – which I think is the epitome of the colloquial phrase, “man plans and God laughs.” We’ve also launched huge new programs and welcomed many new people into our congregation, causing a lot of change and leadership navigation of that change. These are wonderful blessings, but they come with big decisions, careful stewardship, and the responsibility to balance all of these changes thoughtfully.

What’s happening here at Kailua Christian Church is highly unusual for an older, established church like ours. Many churches in our position struggle to break free from the mindset of “what once was.” They often get stuck in self-maintenance rather than looking forward to revitalization and growth. But by the grace of God and with an

openness to the Spirit, we've managed to navigate obstacles together—not perfectly, but faithfully—to focus on Jesus and the mission He has for us.

This is the only church that I've served where the conversation among leadership is continually about Jesus and how what we're doing together glorifies Him, believe it or not. Councils often understand in the back of their minds that their work is about Jesus, but in the interest of time and energy, they opt to get wrapped up in the details of maintenance itself rather than how the maintenance propels the mission. You may recall I once preached a sermon called "The Homeless Church Council" in which I talked about how that Council was focused on empowering powerless people, which I found so admirable (the entire council was composed of homeless individuals). I still remember that Council fondly for its intentional uplift of the poor and oppressed, but their council meetings were definitely mostly about denominational politics and "who left the church closet a mess?!" rather than how all these maintenance details glorified Christ. This is a wonderful, unique church, one where we've witnessed incredible things happen because of your focus on Him with every maintenance issue that you tackle.

That doesn't mean it's been easy. The work of following the Spirit is messy. Big decisions don't come without big feelings and sometimes even big words. Church council meetings can be a little scary at times because the stakes are high, and the questions we're asking are important:

- How do we honor God with our finances and resources?
- How do we steward growth without losing our identity?
- How do we create ministries that reflect Jesus' love in our community?

Sometimes, I admit, I feel a little panicked during these meetings when tensions rise or emotions run high. But then I remember that extraordinary thing about this congregation: our focus is genuinely on Christ and His expectations of us. Because we are knit by this principle, our leadership takes seriously the wisdom of Colossians 3:12-17, even—and especially—when we disagree.

Paul writes, "*As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.*" These aren't just nice words—they're tools for navigating the very challenges we face as a church. And I have seen them in action time and time again.

When disagreements arise, I often find myself preparing to step in, only to realize our leaders have already resolved the issue. They've listened with compassion. They've spoken with kindness. They've shown humility by valuing each other's perspectives. They've practiced meekness by prioritizing unity over pride. And they've demonstrated patience, recognizing that sometimes the best decisions take time and prayer.

This isn't just leadership—it's discipleship. This is what happens when a church community takes seriously the call to let *"the peace of Christ rule in your hearts"* (v. 15) and to *"teach and admonish one another in all wisdom"* (v. 16). This is why I believe our church isn't a typical older, established congregation. Instead, we're a church that is alive, growing, and seeing exciting things happen in ministry, in relationships, and in our finances.

To our new officers, I want you to know this: yes, the work ahead is significant. Yes, there will be difficult decisions to make. And yes, it can sometimes feel overwhelming. But you are stepping into a leadership team that is rooted in spiritual wisdom and equipped with the tools of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. You are not alone.

As a congregation, we can also take heart. The same Spirit that has guided us thus far will continue to lead us in 2025 and beyond. The same values that have shaped our leadership will sustain us through the challenges ahead. And the same God who has blessed us with growth will continue to work through us as we remain faithful to His call.

So, let's give thanks today—for our leaders, for our church, and for the incredible ways God is moving among us. Let's commit ourselves once again to the work of discipleship, allowing the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts and His word to dwell richly in our lives. And let us go forward with confidence, trusting that God's blessings will continue to flow as we walk in faith together.

May God bless our leaders, our church, and the mission He has entrusted to us. Amen.