

"I am the vine, you are the branches; abide in me and you will bear much fruit." John 15:5

Vine & Branches

Monthly News from St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, 720 N. King Street, Honolulu, HI 96817 • Phone (808) 845-2112

February 2012 **Unclean Spirits**

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The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector

In our journey this year with Jesus, walking with the gospel writer Mark, get ready for his breathless pace, plenty of mystery, and his focus on action over words.

After all, it is Mark's gospel that ends with terrified women standing in the empty tomb.

A young man tells them that Jesus is risen, so go, and tell the twelve.

Instead, the women flee in fright, telling no one.

At which point, Mark says: "The End."

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is forever telling those he cures to say nothing.

He admonishes his disciples not to proclaim him Messiah, he insists in the secrecy of his ultimate mission, in his ultimate identity.

That's Mark.

In the very first chapter of Mark, where we find ourselves this morning, Jesus appears, seemingly out of nowhere.

He presents himself to John in the Jordan for baptism.

The sky is torn open and a wild bird plops onto his shoulder.

He is driven into the desert by the same Holy Spirit that now consumes him.

Emerging from that desert many days later; he gathers the first of the twelve disciples and promptly finds himself in

the synagogue, the Jewish church, confronting a man possessed by an unclean spirit.

The pace in Mark is at full sprint.

Mark's favorite word is "immediately."

He uses it repeatedly to keep the galloping pace that continues throughout his remarkable story of this strange man from Galilee.

We don't know what Jesus is teaching them in the synagogue today.

Mark isn't telling us.

All we know is that Jesus is amazing them with a teaching that is to its core authentic.

No mealy mouthed clergy hemming and hawing, excusing and justifying.

Something in what Jesus is saying draws inexorably out of every person a Yes or a No.

The great theologian Karl Barth says "And if the answer is Yes, it means a resolute redirection and conversion of the whole person." Barth, IV.2.Church Dogmatics, 157.

If the answer is No, then you need to do everything you can to stop this Jesus, so you can get your people back in line.

It is the same choice that Jesus confronts us with today:

What is your response?



Rector's Message, continued

What is mine?

And there is this: what about that fellow possessed by the evil spirit?

No doubt he's a problem for folks like us.

My oldest daughter, Elaine, is a clinical psychologist, and my guess is that at the first mention of possession by evil spirits, she's whipping out her DSM IV to accurately size up the precise mental illness afflicting the poor sot.

And yet I wonder if we should be so quick to dismiss spirit possession.

Who among us, after all, hasn't been possessed by evil spirits?

I ask again: haven't we each of us been possessed by evil spirits in the course of our lives?

Who among us has escaped the assault on calm thinking, on kindness, on compassion, when overcome by the spirit of jealousy or the spirit of envy or the spirits of greed, lust, anger or pride?

These spirits invade our lives, often with a regularity that is painful to acknowledge.

They lead us into actions that are deeply regretted, shamefully recalled, bitterly remembered.

And these are not the only spirits with which we must contend.

There are spirits that infest our institutions and collective consciousness:

Spirits that demand an eye for an eye.

Spirits that justify the grotesque accumulation of wealth by a few when the vast majority of fellow human beings live in dire need.

Spirits of demagoguery and fear, provoked to keep the few in positions of power.

These are the powers and principalities that St. Paul so often confronts; spirits that blind all of us to the life God intends for us on this earth.

And in his very first chapter, Mark tells us that in Jesus, we have a redeemer who is stronger than any of those spirits, a friend who is always ready to free us from their snares.

"Christ has come to shatter the domineering designs that shackle people to lower standards of life than God intends.

Christ has come to free us from the demons of prejudice and

pride, greed and guile.

Christ is among us, whenever we gather as the church, to demonstrate that saving power among us.

"If we devote ourselves to anything less than a divinely directed destiny, we have missed the goal of faith." –D. Lose.

"What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?"

Isn't that our question, here, in the early twenty-first century?

At once it seems the whole world is subject to our control, yet at the same time, everything seems to be slipping away?

Will the Euro fail?

Will our economy recover?

How can we find that sense of fellowship that once seemed to define Hawai'i?

"What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?"

In the weeks to come, Mark hurries us along to sit with Jesus as he invites tax collectors and prostitutes to dine with him.

He welcomes people whom no self-respecting holy man would ever welcome.

And in that welcoming, he gently whispers that the sin is not in being possessed by spirits; the sin is refusing to acknowledge that we are.

By gathering all of us who are sick and in need and rotten and self-righteous, the tearing open of the heavens over the Jordan begins the banquet promised so long ago by the prophet Isaiah:

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for *all peoples* a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.

And he will destroy on this mountain

Rector's Message

the shroud that is cast over *all peoples*, the sheet that is spread over *all nations*; he will swallow up death forever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from *all faces*, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from *all the earth*, for the Lord has spoken.” (Isa. 25:6-8)

It is a banquet, open to all who are willing to sit down with all.

It is a banquet made possible by what Archbishop Desmond Tutu calls the “wonderfully low standards of Jesus.”

Just as it is with Jesus, it is the walk, not the talk, that most matters to Mark.

And if the pace of the ministry at St E’s sometimes seems breathless, perhaps we can take heart that in Mark, we have a brother.

A brother, who reminds us that the good news of Jesus Christ is urgent news for a anxious world; news we are compelled to announce, news we are compelled to live!

+amen



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

February 21, 6:30 pm

We will begin with a brief evening prayer, then indulge in a sweet tooth, night time breakfast as we prepare for our journey through Lent. Start saving space in your belly for Uncle Lowell’s fabulous French Toast, Auntie Lani’s mini sausages, pancakes both round and square and more (like some fruit of the vine for the over 21 crowd). Come one, come all.



Happy Birthday

God’s blessings on those with February birthdays!

Elsie Okubo	2/1
Zachary Okimoto	2/2
Andrea Sagucio	2/4
Inasia Thomas	2/7
Ida Teiti	2/8
Shiloh Ramelb	2/8
Alicia Ho Nakata	2/11
Doris Lam	2/11
David Kaloi	2/12
Beatriz Timonio	2/15
Elyson Badua	2/16
Edward Fitzpatrick	2/17
Harlan Arakawa	2/17
Betty Wong	2/17
Sue Jean Chun	2/12
Faye Tsukamoto	2/24
Tulenkun Tulenkun Jr.	2/25
Kazner Alexander	2/26
Herold Unarce	2/26
Ashton Ballesteros	2/26
Ethan Anderson	2/27
Lilia Timonio	2/28

A Note To Our Readers

To you many hundreds who receive this newsletter but aren’t able to join us each Sunday, please consider a quarterly gift to the St. Elizabeth’s Pastoral Fund. Our church is located in Honolulu’s inner city. We have as our neighbors many immigrant families whose day-to-day life is just figuring out how to get by. Our Pastoral Fund is used almost exclusively to help folks pay a part of their rent and part of their electric bill. We have too many houseless friends and too many living without power. Your contribution can help. It’s fully tax deductible. Thanks so much!

David+





Shim Hall was lovingly arranged in traditional Tongan mourning cloths.

Aloha, Fr. Saimone

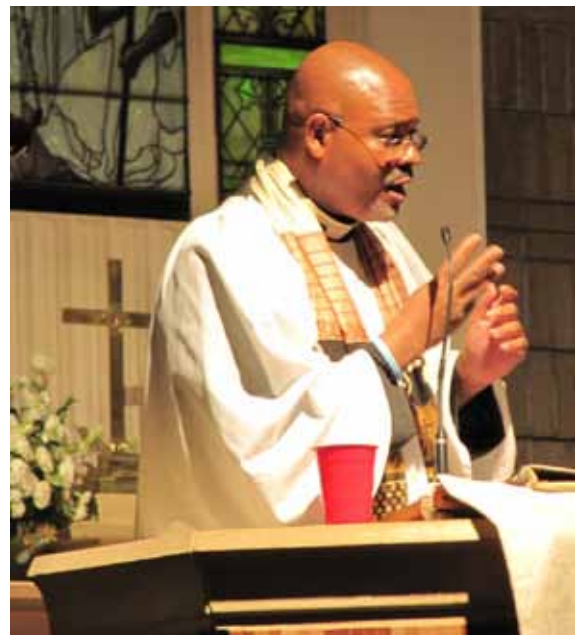


Mother Jodene Hawkins came from Maui to pay her respects.

Martin Luther King Service



Music was provided by the Trinity Missionary Baptist Choir at the Jan. 16th ecumenical service honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.



The homily was delivered by the Very Rev. Walter Brownrigg, Dean of St. Andrew's Cathedral.

Learning Plus Fun at First to Work



Charles Steffey is teaching the men of the First to Work program basic carpentry and woodworking skills, including math computation, use of tools like jigsaws, and a job placement program. All are welcome to these classes, not just those in First to Work. If you would like to find out more information, call Kathy in the church office, 845-2112.



St. Elizabeth's has saved on the cost of a janitorial service because of the hard work of the ladies of the First to Work program. They clean the entire campus including all the restrooms and the church.

Chinese New Year at St. E's



St. Elizabeth's celebrated Chinese New Year after church on Sunday, January 22nd. Thanks to the Chun family for providing the Lion Dancers. Of course, there was lots of ono-licious food shared in Shim Hall.

Senior Cross Awards



Senior Cross Awardees Charles Kokubun, Collette Arakawa and Nora Kurosu were recognized for their outstanding service to St. Elizabeth's. Viliami Lino received the Junior Cross for his service.



Attendance

1/1	Sunday 8:15 Eucharist	94
1/1	Ilokano Service	45
1/4	Wed. Healing Eucharist	29
1/4	Ilokano Service	28
1/8	Sunday 8:15 Eucharist	142
1/8	Chinese Eucharist	5
1/11	Wed. Healing Eucharist	31
1/14	Sunday 8:15 am Eucharist	171
1/14	Chinese Eucharist	5
1/18	Wed. Healing Eucharist	48
1/22	Sunday 8:15 am Eucharist	153
1/22	Chinese Eucharist	5
1/25	Wed. Healing Eucharist	29
1/29	Sunday 8:15 am Eucharist	164

Election Results

At this year's Annual Meeting on January 29th, 2012 elected to the Vestry were **Roy Chee** and **Kevin McCartney**. Continuing are **Lowell Ing, Gretchen Jong, Christine Ling, Margarita Suyat, Ignacio Terno** and **Arleen Young**. **Preston Lentz** was re-elected Junior Warden. Our convention delegates are **Arleen Young, Preston Lentz, Douglas Ing, Nancy Au** and **Patsy Ching**; alternates are **Fran Kramer** and **Charles Steffey**.

Congratulations and thanks to all these willing folks!

Born to Eternal Life

We offer our deepest sympathy and prayers to the family of **Mildred Hirashiki** who passed from this life on January 30, 2012. May she and all the departed move from glory to glory in God's nearer presence.

"Imagine what might happen to the church in our time if we took seriously the praise of the Psalmist who says "we are little lower than the angels;" or Paul's revelation that we are "God's masterpiece." What if we truly believed we have nothing to prove to anyone? What if faith becomes a radical trust in God and the essential goodness of creation? Would this not be the ultimate form of liberation? Isn't the end of all striving the true definition of freedom?"
-R. Meyers, *Saving Jesus From The Church*, 113.

Irony? *The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been canceled due to a conflict.*

"The Bible is the story of God's peoples' struggle to be God's people." -Source unknown



Fr. David is inviting all the ladies of the church to lunch — and he's treating! **Friday, February 17th at 11:30 am**, Happy Day Restaurant, 3553 Waiālae Avenue in Kaimuki. Sign up on the clipboard. Donations will be welcomed for the Pastoral Fund if the lunch is good!

The Bible According to Kids



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In the beginning, which occurred near the start, there was nothing but God, darkness, and some gas. The Bible says, 'The Lord thy God is one, but I think He must be a lot older than that.

Anyway, God said, 'Give me a light!' and someone did. Then God made the world.

He split the Adam and made Eve. Adam and Eve were naked, but they weren't embarrassed because mirrors hadn't been invented yet.

Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating one bad apple, so they were driven from the Garden of Eden . . . Not sure what they were driven in though, because they didn't have cars.

Adam and Eve had a son, Cain, who hated his brother as long as he was Abel.

Pretty soon all of the early people died off, except for Methuselah, who lived to be like a million or something.

One of the next important people was Noah, who was a good guy, but one of his kids was kind of a Ham. Noah built a large boat and put his family and some animals on it. He asked some other people to join him, but they said they would have to take a rain check.

After Noah came Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jacob was more famous than his brother, Esau, because Esau sold Jacob his birthmark in exchange for some pot roast. Jacob had a son named Joseph who wore a really loud sports coat.

Another important Bible guy is Moses, whose real name was Charlton Heston. Moses led the Israel Lights out of Egypt and away from the evil Pharaoh after God sent ten plagues on Pharaoh's people. These plagues included frogs, mice, lice, bowels, and no cable.

God fed the Israel Lights every day with manicotti. Then he gave them His Top Ten Commandments. These include: don't lie, cheat, smoke, dance, or covet your neighbor's stuff.

Oh, yeah, I just thought of one more: Humor thy father and thy mother.

One of Moses' best helpers was Joshua who was the first Bible guy to use spies. Joshua fought the battle of Geritol and the fence fell over on the town

After Joshua came David. He got to be king by killing a giant with a slingshot.. He had a son named Solomon who had about 300 wives and 500 porcupines. My teacher says he was wise, but that doesn't sound very wise to me

After Solomon there were a bunch of major league prophets. One of these was Jonah, who was swallowed by a big whale and then barfed up on the shore.

There were also some minor league prophets, but I guess we don't have to worry about them.

After the Old Testament came the New Testament. Jesus is the star of The New. He was born in Bethlehem in a barn. (I wish I had been born in a barn too, because my mom is always saying to me, 'Close the door! Were you born in a barn?' It would be nice to say, 'As a matter of fact, I was.')

During His life, Jesus had many arguments with sinners like ;the Pharisees and the Democrats.

Jesus also had twelve opossums.

The worst one was Judas Asparagus. Judas was so evil that they named a terrible vegetable after him.

Jesus was a great man. He healed many leopards and even preached to some Germans on the Mount.

But the Democrats and Republicans put Jesus on trial before Pontius the Pilot. Pilot didn't stick up for Jesus. He just washed his hands instead.

Anyways, Jesus died for our sins, then came back to life again. He went up to Heaven but will be back at the end of the Aluminum. His return is foretold in the book of Revolution.

Author unknown. Shared by Sylvia Rowland

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil and Jeff Keane



"I can't find what channel we're on."

from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*
Reprinted with permission of Bil Keane

Food for Thought

"American preachers have a task more difficult, perhaps, than those faced by us under South Africa's apartheid, or Christians under communism. We had obvious evils to engage; you have to unwrap your culture from years of red, white and blue myth. You have to expose, and confront, the great disconnect between the kindness, compassion, and caring of most American people, and the ruthless way American power is experienced, directly and indirectly, by the poor of the earth. You have to help good people see how they have let their institutions do their sinning for them. This is not easy among people who really believe that their country does nothing but good, but it is necessary, not only for the future, but for us all."

-Peter Storey, *Letter From South Africa*

"Jesus tells his followers to leave their families of origin because the families we grow up in keep most people from asking the bigger questions. Conventional family wisdom tells you to be a nice kid in your hometown and do what nice kids in your hometown do. For this reason, most religious founders tell you to leave your family. Call it a necessary detachment, to break away, to get a bigger world view instead of just fulfilling Mama's and Daddy's dreams for you."

-R. Rohr, *Jesus' Plan For a New World*, 104.



Ash Wednesday, February 22

12:00 Noon

6:00 PM

Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion. There will be no healing service or adult study on this day.

*Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.*