

"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

January 2010

The Right Reverend
Robert L. Fitzpatrick
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

The Reverend
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Priest Associate

The Reverend Saimone Lino,
Diocesan Missioner

The Reverend Dr.
Gerald G. Gifford.
Rector Emeritus

The Reverend Peter S. M. Fan,
Cantonese Language Priest

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Accepted

The Reverend David J. Gierlach

The young man rushed up to the religion professor after class and practically yelled: "I can't buy this stuff about a virgin birth! Do I have to believe in a miraculous birth in order to believe in Jesus?!" The professor replied, "In one sense no, but in another sense, yes, you do." "We start you off on the easier truths, like the virgin birth, and then move to the harder truths: like, the poor and the outcast are God's royalty while the rich and successful are in big trouble. Like, love your enemy; forgive every time you are asked for forgiveness; and, trust in God rather than in military might."

Compared to these, the virgin birth isn't so hard to swallow, is it?

Just as the virgin birth, God creating anew in Mary's womb, without our help, is a foundation stone of our faith, so too are these other truths. And for most of us, swallowing the notion of a virgin birth is far easier than opening doors, and opening hearts, to our enemy; far easier than seeing the face of Jesus in that bum holding a sign asking for loose change at the traffic light; far easier than giving freely of what we have; far easier than taking up our cross and following him.

This night, God breaks into our world, into the ordinary lives of smelly shepherds, of paranoid kings, of Persian wise men and of an unwed teen and her baffled fiancé. This night, God comes to those on the outside, to those living in the outskirts, and

says to them:

"Behold! I bring you tidings of great joy!"

Rounding up those on the outside is something Christmas has done for over 2000 years. And tonight is no different.

Tonight, much like Easter Sunday, is a time when many will venture into these pews, pews that are otherwise unfamiliar most of the rest of the year. Perhaps the reason each of you come is entirely personal, entirely different from the reason that brings your pew mate.

Perhaps you fear that in the week in, and week out, of worship, the church may not be a friendly place.

Its regulars, perhaps, are not friendly people. Perhaps, you fear you have sinned, or are unworthy, or are simply worried that your life is somehow less than holy, that this is not the place for you. Yet this night, you are here.

Or perhaps you feel none of these things. Perhaps your life is a good one. Your self-esteem is in tact. You have few if any regrets. Yet this night, here you are.

And this night, as we remember to whom and how God chose to come among us, whether or not you lay judgments upon yourself, whether or not you have fears that may be eating your soul, whether or not you hold doubts in your heart; it can all be



Rector's Message, continued

brought as an offering here; and laid at the feet of the child; this child who comes to make all things new.

I know it is a challenge to say that. I know that it is a challenge to hear it. The child has made all things new? Not really. Not if you just look around. Wars continue to rage. Our political discourse can't seem to rise above the level of a shout or a sneer. Unemployment is high, the life so many thought was a sure thing has disappeared, the poor increase in numbers and in misery. Why make the claim that all things are new? We are not the first to ask this question. Probably, we will not be the last.

At the worst of the Bosnian war in the early 1990s, as guns were fired and atrocities committed, a Christmas Eve service was held in Sarajevo, at St. Anthony's Church. Jews and Muslims joined the Christians at a standing room only service in the basement of the church. When asked why she was there, a Jewish woman replied: "We people of Sarajevo have shared everything else, I just wanted to be here with the others to share this."

The parish priest stood before a makeshift altar, and said: "How can we speak of a happy Christmas as we stand here in the heart of this besieged city? What is there left in life as we have lost fathers, mothers, husbands and wives and even our children?"

The priest then began to reflect on the life and suffering of Jesus, especially his sense of abandonment as he hung from the cross. From the deep well of the Gospel, the priest drew these words: "Jesus teaches us that human judgments are not the last judgments, that human justice is not the last justice, and that the power that humans exercise over one another is not the last power." Rutledge, *The Bible and the NYT*, 59.

No matter your circumstances, no matter your pain, no matter your success, your true identity is that of a child of God. And even more, you are a beloved child of God. Beloved by the child that God himself became. Beloved by a God who knows every form of human difficulty, and who promises NOT to rescue us from danger, but to be with us always, in the midst of every danger. Perhaps it is to be reminded of that unalterable fact; perhaps that is why you are here tonight.

This holy night, as we celebrate God becoming one of us, we are invited to remember that we are each of us made in the image of God. "It has been said that if we really knew how to see with the

eyes of the soul, we would see angels going before every person we meet, saying: "Make way for the image of God! Make way for the image of God!" Long, *Testimony*, 46.

This night, God says to the whole world, "You are accepted. You are accepted by that which is greater than you, the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not intend anything. Simply accept the fact that you are accepted." Tillich.

In this child, through the grace of God, all of humanity is home free. The desert blooms, the virgin gives birth, and you, my friends, are accepted.

May you enter your days holding fast to this truth.

+amen



Attendance

12/1	Wednesday Eucharist	13
12/1	Ilokano Service	33
12/5	Sunday Eucharist	145
12/5	Ilokano Service	38
12/8	Wednesday Eucharist	14
12/12	Sunday Eucharist	134
12/12	Chinese Service	5
12/15	Wednesday Eucharist	8
12/19	Sunday Eucharist	117
12/24	Christmas Eve	199
12/25	Christmas Day	87
12/26	Sunday Eucharist	101
12/26	Chinese Service	4



Born to Eternal Life

Walter Kau, one of St. Elizabeth's sons, was born to life eternal on December 20th at the age of 90. He started as an acolyte at St. Elizabeth's and remained a faithful follower of Christ through his long life.

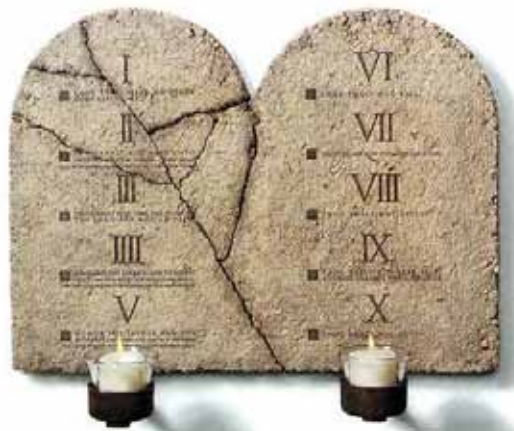
He was born in Kalihi of first generation Chinese immigrants who came to Hawaii in the late 1800s, and he and

his brothers were all baptized at St. Elizabeth's. After graduation from Eastman School of Music, Walter was offered the position of organist at St. Clement's in Honolulu where he remained for more than 50 years before retiring and returning home to St. Elizabeth's as a Eucharistic minister, part-time organist, wonderful piano player and "kick up your heels" dancer. Uncle Walter's ready smile, generous heart and warm embrace will be sorely missed.

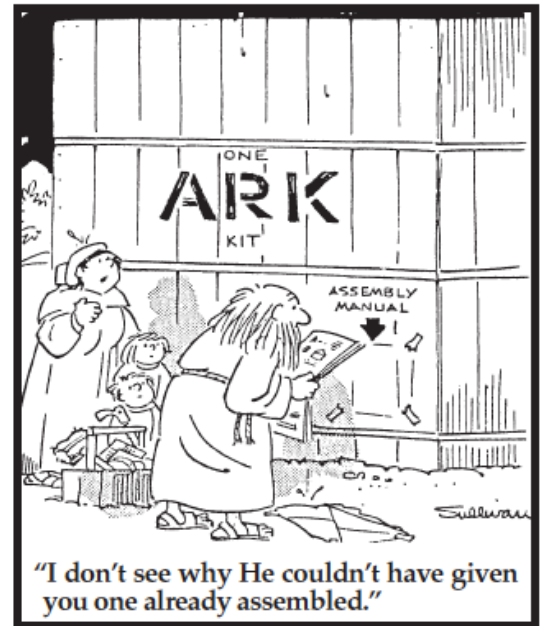
Services for Walter Kau will be at St. Elizabeth's, **Saturday, January 8th, visitation at 8:30 am and service at 9:30 am.**

The Ten Commandments

We tend to think of the Ten Commandments as ten things we'd really like to do, but that God doesn't want us to do. So to please God, we should not do them. But that misses the point, misses the way the commandments begin; "I am the Lord your God. I brought you out of slavery into the land of freedom and this is the shape of freedom. I love you so much I am not putting up with your enslavement any more. I, the Lord your God am setting things right. I am setting you so free you don't even have to have any other gods. You have been given so much you are free not to covet what is your neighbor's. You are free to have the joyous rest of the Sabbath day and to keep it holy. This is not a list of rules; it is the shape of freedom. It is the quality of life in a world remade by the judgment of God.



William Brosend, *The Preaching of Jesus*,
Copyright © 2010, Westminster John Knox Press, page 119



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Quotable Quotes

*When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.*

Howard Thurman,
"The Work of Christmas"



Wine Tasting is Grand Success!

Delicious food, wonderful music, and great wines were on hand at the first-ever **"A Taste of St. Elizabeth's"** on Saturday, December 11th which benefit the Scholarship Fund and Outreach Ministries. Over 200 people attended this grand party and about \$10,000 was raised through ticket sales and the Silent Auction. We'll long remember the Kendall Jackson wines, delicious smoked meats and shrimp (donated by the **Gierlachs** and **Lowell Ing**), tasty pupus from church members, noodles and Chinese chicken salad from **Raymond Siu's** PahKe's Restaurant, and made-on-the-spot risotto by **Glenn Woo**. The non-alcoholic drinks were delicious too! Adding to the joy, Mother Jodene made a surprise visit and loved the love she received!



Shown here are Michael Hopkins, Andrea Brody and some other guy! Michael is Kendall Jackson's top man in the Pacific and generously donated the wines. Thanks, Michael!



Everyone enjoyed the cool jazz from the **Gilbert Batangan Quartet**.



Sharon Oshiro and **Faye Tsukamoto** were cashiers at the Country Store (chaired by **Nora Kurosu**).

Children's Christmas Party December 18th, is Tons of Fun!

The very next weekend, the annual St. Elizabeth's Neighborhood Children's Christmas party was held on Saturday, December 18th, with food, fun, children's music and hula presentations, balloon animals by **Balloon Monsoon** (Greg Hirashiki, Darien Chow and Sonny Ruan), presents for all children and a visit by Santa Claus (with a real beard!) Albert Wong donated his shave ice machine, syrups and all the fixings. Over 200 were served!



Swashbucklers had fun playing with balloon swords, thanks to Balloon Monsoon.



More Christmas Party Photos



(Left) The children's hula presentation and a visit with Santa Claus.



Our Christmas tree was home-grown and came from our own yard!



Violinist Elaine Yu, played lovely carols on Christmas Eve.

Christmas at St. Elizabeth's



The story of the Nativity was retold by our children and youth in a Christmas pageant at the Christmas Eve service.



Mahalo

to everyone who donated lovely poinsettias:

Nancy Au (in memory of Reginald Au and Robert and Rose Shim), Evelyn Auyong in memory of Herman Auyong and Lydia and Henry Auyong; Collette Arakawa in memory of Wallace T. H. Chun and in honor of Sue Jean Chun; Laura C. Aweau in memory of James Y. S. & Elizabeth Ching; Sarah & Jerry Bush, in memory of Annie and Nathaniel Chock and Jennifer Bush; Andrew and Rita Ching in memory of Thomas Y. F. Ching, Entas Ching and Tin Bow Lau; Elsie Ching honoring Fr. G. Laun, Fr. Franklin & Norma Chun, the remarkable Tyau Sisters: Gertrude, Hannah, Frances & Lillian, Fran Thomas, Fr. Moki Hino and in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Akui Tyau, Juliet and Tim Chong Young, Margaret Chun, Ella Heu Lum, ottie Fung Heu and Edward S. T. Ching; Akiu Chock, in memory of James L. L. Chock; Beryl Goo in memory of Doris Goo; Millie & Jerry Goo in memory of Philip Lung and Joseph Dung; Mother Jodene & Kit Hawkins in thanksgiving for St. Elizabeth's Church family and ministries; Allen K. Hoe in memory of 1 Lt. Nainoa Hoe, Tom and Peggy Ishida in memory of Linda H. Ishida; Laura M. Iwami in memory of Masayoshi & Haru Iwami; Dorothy Jung in memory of Richard Jung; Pearl and Francis Kau in memory of Mabel & Ten Fook Ho; Kealoha Ohana in memory of Lilinoe Wong and Samuel & Annabel Moku, Sr.; Charles Kokubun in memory of the Kokubun family members; Estella Lau in memory of Yuen Lin & Stella Lau; Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Leong in memory of Kin Hung Leong, Lo Lin Leong and Ukie Kihara; Marily Li in memory of Ying & Fu Li; Christine Ling in memory of Elizabeth Mark Ling; Juliet Ling in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Alan Ling and in honor of Christine Ling; Patreace Smith and Dot Mason; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Okubo in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Seiji Okubo; Rev. Imelda Padasdao in memory of Forentino, Mario, Auclino & Elmer Padasdao & Triponia Abad; Victoria Sagucio in memory of Felix Sagucio and Jaime Sagucio; Lynette Shim in memory of Wallace Shim, Dennis & Laura Chun and Edward & Florene Shim; Margarita Suyat; Faye Tsukamoto in memory of Jack & Masa Tsukamoto; Marjory Tyau in memory of Wilfred Tyau, Jennifer Watanabe in memory of Chiyoni & Shomei; Frank Yap Family in memory of Christina Yap, Florence Yap and Frank Yap, Sr., Arleen Young in memory of Juliet & Tim Chong Young.



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with January birthdays!

Lynette Shim	1/1
Enriqueta Haller	1/1
Serenity Michael	1/6
Nella Kleinschmidt	1/10
Rebecca Kleinschmidt	1/10
Charlotte Jarrett	1/13
Troy Esaki	1/14
Soo Kil Park	1/14
Sylvia Rowland	1/14
Tarla Francis	1/14
Shaienne Sunagawa	1/18
Elyas Badua	1/18
Sharlene Yap	1/19
CharleySue Steffey	1/19
Jane Leong	1/20
Melba Meyshine	1/20
Bertha Chong	1/23
Mark Anderson	1/25
Imensy Eichy	1/27
Iris Park	1/28

May's Fancy Table

May Chock's table setting won a ribbon— Novice-People's Choice—3rd place at Lakewood Gardens Beautiful Tables Showcase 2010, in Lakewood, Washington. Congratulations, May!



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Christ Climbed Down

By Lawrence Ferlinghetti

CHRIST climbed down
from His bare Tree
this year
and ran away to where
there were no rootless Christmas trees
hung with candycanes and breakable
stars

Christ climbed down
from His bare Tree
this year
and ran away to where
there were no gilded Christmas trees
and no tinsel Christmas trees
and no tinfoil Christmas trees
and no pink plastic Christmas trees
and no gold Christmas trees
and no black Christmas trees
and no powderblue Christmas trees
hung with electric candles
and encircled by tin electric trains
and clever cornball relatives

Christ climbed down
from His bare Tree
this year
and softly stole away into
some anonymous Mary's womb again
where in the darkest night
of everybody's anonymous soul
He awaits again
an unimaginable and impossibly
Immaculate Reconciliation
the very craziest
of Second Comings

*From the sixth printing of the author's volume
of verse, A Coney Island of the Mind (1958),
New Directions, 333 Sixth Avenue, New York,
NY, and reprinted with the permission of the
publishers.*



Bishop Bob Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Fitzpatrick

The Bishop is Coming!

Friday, January 28th

6:30 pm

Shim Hall

The Bishop will be at St. Elizabeth's for his annual visit during our Adult Study class, the last Friday of January at 6:30 pm.

Please come and welcome our Bishop!

Smoke in Shim Hall!

There was some excitement on the day after Christmas about 11:20 am when the counters were still here.

Smoke was coming out of the closet in Shim Hall — this is the closet where all the cleaning equipment and supplies are stored behind the Kitchen. The fire department responded to the alarm. A 100-watt light bulb was left on and was in contact with a plastic bag filled with the Santa costume. There were no flames, but there was smoke because of plastic burning.



Reminder: Please turn off all lights!

