

"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

May 2012

Abundance

The Right Reverend
Robert L. Fitzpatrick
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

The Reverend
Imelda S. Padasdao,
Priest Associate

The Reverend Dr.
Gerald G. Gifford.
Rector Emeritus

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

Hsiao Ying "Ajaon" Chen
Choir Director

Marie Wang
Organist

Katherine Crosier
Parish Administrator
Editor and Layout
Music Consultant

Arleen Young
Senior Warden

Preston Lentz
Junior Warden

Secretary / Clerk

Heather Manning, Treasurer

Website:
www.stelizabeth720.org

Email: stelizabethhawaii@gmail.com

The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector

The verse that leads immediately into today's gospel lesson has Jesus saying: "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

And from that teaching, Jesus goes on to talk about what that abundant life looks like for those willing to follow him.

Sometimes, the abundant life looks like courage.

Other times, it looks like a circus.

Sometimes it looks like forgetting yourself, and other times it means being tough as nails!

More on that in just a moment.

First, we need to size up abundance as Jesus gives it; and the American way of abundance.

It should come as no surprise that the two are miles apart.

Our neighbor down the street gives me a chuckle every time I walk Sammy around the block.

This neighbor is in his sixties, and in front of his house is a big, bright red double axel pick up truck, a huge yellow boat, a Cadillac Esplanade SUV, a sporty sports car with a big wing on the back, and two motorcycles.

His girlfriend is a very pretty gal twenty years his junior.

And I think: "Here's a man who loves his toys!"

Abundance, in America, looks like this fellow's life.

That kind of abundance is sold to us every day in print ads, on TV and even by some mindless ministers who hawk the

so-called prosperity gospel (the one that says: "God wants you to be rich!").

It's the air that we breathe, the ocean we swim in everyday.

After all, Madison Avenue isn't stupid.

They learned early on that human beings, for the most part, walk around with holes inside; holes that *need* to be filled; holes that *long* to be filled.

These holes, of course, are part of who we are, and are meant to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

These holes are the places where God touches us; where our deepest aspirations can be fulfilled; where truth may come to rest within us.

But we are also a fallen people.

And fallen people often look for the softer, easier way, something less demanding to fill the hole: and Americans in particular love to fill the hole with stuff.

Which of course satisfies, but only for a little while.

So we try more stuff.

Which, again, doesn't satisfy for long.

If gold and silver won't do it, what will?

That's the question our reading from Acts sets out to answer.

It's the story we've been following these last weeks about Peter; a story that ought to be entitled "No Good Deed Goes Unpunished."

As you will recall, a few weeks ago, Peter is heading into church to pray when a paralyzed panhandler asks for a few bucks for lunch.

Peter responds that he's broke, but he



Rector's Message continued

has something better than lunch money (something better than gold and silver too); and invoking with full confidence the name of Jesus, helps the now formerly paralyzed man to his feet, where he starts dancing in the street!

Much like our friends at the Vatican, who only a few days ago silenced various Irish priests who want to debate issues like women's ordination and top down authority, so too the religious big shots in Peter's time are furious that, as it says in the original Greek, a couple of "illiterate idiots" would have the temerity to work such a miracle.

Peter and his pals are arrested and called to stand before "THE IMPORTANT PEOPLE."

These IMPORTANT PEOPLE cannot believe that what they thought they had the market on – is now being given out for free by, as I mentioned a moment ago, illiterate idiots.

Peter, however, is just getting warmed up.

The formerly mystified and frightened disciple, now filled with the Holy Spirit, gives them, figuratively speaking of course, both barrels.

"This man," Peter says, pointing to the still dancing – once paralyzed man - "is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead."

Peter – whether he knows it or not -- is pointing to the very nature of God's abundance: God's abundance looks like ---- healing. Look inside.

Look around.

What do we individually, and we collectively, need more than anything?

And yet, when it comes to our faith about whether God can or will heal; whether what needs to be healed is an illness or infirmity or our broken world; the fact is we are most of us practicing atheists: we too often just don't believe that God can or will heal.

So today, in the middle of our Easter season, as we gather as the Body of Christ, Jesus, the Good Shepherd, gently tugs at our collective elbow, and says:

"Believe it!"

The healing that is God's abundance begins with recognizing our brokenness.

Things can't be fixed unless you see they need fixing.

And that's what Peter's getting at when he tells his brothers in Jerusalem, those rulers who just aren't getting it, that there's only one place to look:

"There is salvation in no one else," Peter explains, "for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved."

Now, this is an important line; one that's often been seized upon like a club to beat non-Christians over the head.

That's not what Peter's getting at.

Peter's not somehow condemning Buddhists or Hindus or Muslims.

Muslims had yet to exist and Peter probably never heard of a Buddhist or a Hindu.

He's not beating the drums of Christian one-upsmanship.

Too many modern Christians keep making that mistake and misuse Peter's words to suggest something he never intended.

What Peter is getting at when he tells the Jewish leaders that

"There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved," is something else entirely.

Peter, it seems, is intent on proclaiming "that in the grand reversal of the resurrection" – the condemned loser – the one they laughed at as he hung in agony on the cross – the one they thought they had disposed of -- this rejected stone is now the cornerstone – "*this* is the power of making broken lives whole."

In other words "the name of Jesus" is not a magical incantation nor is it a slogan for intolerance of other religious paths.

It is the Way.

"The Way is the way of humility and self-giving, it is the Way that rejects coercive power.

It is the Way of laying down one's life for others, of taking up the cross, of being a follower of Jesus."

*"The Most Misused Scripture in the World,"
"Good, Life-giving Shepherd of Many Pastures,"
D. Mark Davis, 4/23/12.*

It is the Way, in other words, of love.

Don't get me wrong.

Too often when we hear the word Love what comes to mind is sugary sentiment and gooey weak-kneed affection.

That's not the love Jesus is getting at.

Rector's Message

The love of Jesus is tough, insistent, definitely crazy, constantly trying, patiently waiting and always ready to pay the consequences.

You don't need to take my word.

John tells us so quite clearly: that's what it means to be the good shepherd who dies for the flock; that's what it means for his followers to walk the talk: meaning that we don't just pray for the hungry, we feed them; we don't just feel bad for the naked, we clothe them.

It's the hard love of the parent of an addict who lets the child hit bottom, lets the child suffer the consequences of addiction, refusing to lessen the blows, since only in that great effort of parental self-sacrifice can the addict experience the pain that becomes the rope he may finally use to climb out of addiction.

It's the patient love of brothers and sisters who care for aging siblings; and children caring for aging parents; a patience that gradually comes to accept the profound role reversals such care brings; that comes to accept the loss unfolding before one's eyes.

It's the consistent love of parents raising children, having the courage to set limits and the wisdom to know when limits need to be spread out.

And it's the crazy love of opening churches and borders to all kinds of strangers and aliens and wayfarers, and seeing what might happen next!

In all these ways, with so many more left unsaid, in all the varieties of love that each situation requires, we lay down our lives for one another; and in that laying down, discover, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly, the abundant life that Jesus promises to each and every one of us.

+amen

Sunday School NEWS



The Sunday School had a very busy Lenten Season, a very blessed Easter and we look forward to a safe and happy summer break!

The children participated in the opening Lenten services each Sunday with the lighting of the Lenten wreath and readings, the Palm Sunday blessing of the palms, distributing the palms and marching in the parade. During Lent, there was one class of 15 who met with Fr. David before the church service for First Communion instructions. On Easter Day, the children's handbell choir made their debut during the Gospel hymn, the first communion class was honored by receiving first communion, a cross-stitched key ring with their photo inserted and a cross on the back made by **Peggy Ishida**, and a white ribbon cross made by **Lisa Anne Mitsuka Chan** and everyone had more than enough eggsiting Easter fun with the Egg Hunt and fancy brunch that followed the Easter service! *Alleluia! the Lord is risen indeed!*

The children are busy working with **Doris Fan** in creating flowers for moms, tutus and aunties on Mother's Day. This year Mrs. Fan will also teach the children to make vases to put hold their creations! The children asked that this year their flowers be given to their special 'moms' and in the summer will make other crafts for the congregation.

We do hope you are enjoying the music that the children have learned and share on the second Sundays during the offertory. **Miss Ajaon** has the challenging task of keeping the kids on the beat and learning a new song each month! What is even more challenging is that the children do not have much music time in the classroom or after class. Next year we will be adding more instruments to the program and hope that in a few years we will really have a children's choir!

The last day of Sunday School will be on May 27th. On that day the children who participated in the Sunday School Program will be recognized. They are thankful to all of you for your generous donations and support throughout the school year! Just a loving smile and they feel so much a part of the church family!!!



Easter at St. Elizabeth's



The beautiful altar is adorned with Easter lilies and greenery.

Nearly 300 wonderful folks joined us for our Easter celebration... and nearly 400 stayed to eat! Thanks to **Auntie Nora Kurosu** and **Mrs. Ignacia Terno** and all the wonderful folks who brought belt-loosening foods from all over the world —Filipino pancit, great Chinese food, Chuukese tapioca —all we were missing was Polish Perogis! *(All photos by Thomas Ishida).*



Who said kids don't come to church?!



The Children's Handbell Choir made its debut, conducted by Ajaon Chen.



The handbell choir played the offertory



Everyone enjoyed the sumptuous Easter feast. So much food!





Attendance

4/1	Palm Sunday 9:00 am	218
4/4	Ilokano Service	28
4/5	Maundy Thursday	66
4/6	Good Friday noon	65
4/6	Good Friday 6 pm	42
4/8	Easter Day 9:00 am	277
4/11	Wed. Healing Eucharist	21
4/15	Sunday 9:00 am Eucharist	177
4/15	Chinese Eucharist	4
4/18	Wed. Healing Eucharist	35
4/22	Sunday 9:00 am Eucharist	154
4/22	Chinese Eucharist	3
4/25	Wed. Healing Eucharist	33
4/29	Sunday 9:00 am Eucharist	158
4/29	Chinese Eucharist	5



Born to eternal life

Our beloved **Gertrude Tyau** was born to eternal life, just three months shy of her 99th birthday, on April 11th, 2012.

Gertrude was our friend, mentor and saint of St. Elizabeth's. Services were held on April 28th.



The Lino Family, shown above, gave a beautiful tapa cloth tapestry in memory of our friend **Father Saimone Lino**.

“Nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral issues of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence. The foundation of such a method is love.” —Martin Luther King

Lei making Class



Mother Imelda is the teacher.

Na Hokulele is newest program

The Na Hokulele, aka Shooting Stars program continues to touch the hearts of everyone. Saturday's program day defines what it means to be a community: *"Love doesn't mean doing extraordinary or heroic things. It means knowing how to do ordinary things with tenderness."* — Jean Vanier, Community And Growth

It might seem ordinary, but the love and care that went into the activities: the sweet rolls, a hot cup of coffee, a yogurt cup, a clean diaper, a quick "pray in church," another yogurt cup, a coffee pot refill, . . . are priceless.

Saturday there were children from the STEM Workshop, with HPU's Eileen and Bryan, looking for bacteria in ordinary St. E's places (the garden, on bugs, . . . gee, who knows where else they found it?) Lab work with the microscope followed to check out the students' hypotheses . . .

Below are brief reports from Fane Lino (also our Registrar) about the registration and her **Writing Workshop**, from Juliette about **Media/Filmmaking** Workshop, and from Scott about the **Adult Workforce Skills** Workshop:

The Saturday Adult Training has three new men registered and eight women, for a total of 11 adults in Scott's Workforce Skills class. There were 12 children with Juliette for the Media training class. The Literacy and the STEM class during the week has 47 children registered. Children range from 1st grade through 11th grade. We also have 7 four year olds registered. So far Na Hokulele students are 54 children + 11 Adults = 65

One literacy class ranges from ages 4 to 9 and the children are amazing! It seemed that one of the girls in first grade didn't know



the colors because she just sat there quietly, too shy to talk. But, when we sat one on one she not only knew her colors, she rattled off the entire alphabet! (Fane Lino)

Media/Film:

We start with younger participants and then we switch groups and the older kids come to work on storytelling. With both groups, I talked about story and had them lay the basic arc for stories we are going to "tell" with pictures next week. Interestingly, the younger kids talked a lot about bullies and most of them named themselves as the main character or protagonist. The older class was more

interested in talking about the violence in the community and how to defend against bad people, guns and fights. Next week we are going to story-board these ideas. Thank you for this amazing opportunity, I think we are going to be able to make some very incredible films. (Juliette)



Laptop computers are used for the Adult Workforce Skills class.

Adult Workforce Skills. We had a full room with about 11 participants. They were all very attentive and wanted to learn. Their English comprehension skills are very low. However, I think that they understood the main point, the importance of goals. They are very interested in learning English and computer skills, so the next class should be exciting for them. A few of the participants were very enthusiastic about the program and excited about the skills we will be learning. This is going to be a good experience for us all. (Scott)

Stay tuned!
Suzanne Langford



Holy! Holy! Holy!



Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!
 Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy! Holy!
 Holy! Holy! Holy!

The world is holy! The soul
 is holy! The skin is holy! The
 nose is holy! The tongue and
 hand holy!

Everything is holy!
 everybody's holy! everywhere
 is holy! everyday is in eternity!
 Everyman's an angel!

The bum's as holy as the
 seraphim! the madman is holy
 as you my soul are holy!

The typewriter is holy the
 poem is holy the voice is holy the hearers are holy the ecstasy is
 holy! . . .

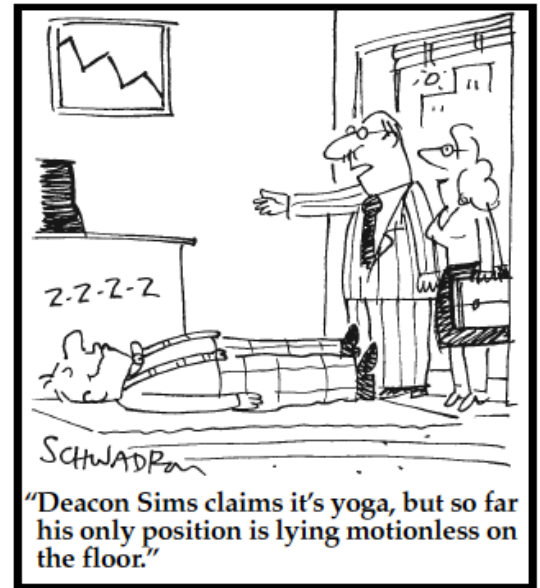
holy the unknown and suffering beggars holy the hideous
 human angels! . . .

Holy the sea holy the desert holy the railroad holy the
 locomotive holy the visions holy the hallucinations holy the miracles
 holy the eyeball holy the abyss!

Holy forgiveness! mercy! charity! faith! Holy! Ours! bodies!
 suffering! magnanimity!

Holy the supernatural extra brilliant intelligent kindness of the
 soul!

-Alan Ginsberg



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*God's blessings on those with
 May birthdays!*

Richard Haller	5/2
Jennie Pang	5/3
Taylor Venenciano	5/3
Evelyn Tyau	5/4
Gerald Gifford	5/4
Mermi Dereas	5/4
Leslie Mitsuka	5/5
Preston Lentz	5/8
Katherine Roke	5/8
Margie Leong	5/10
Jessie Hayashi	5/10
Felicidad Bueno	5/12
Harold Shak	5/13
Inoleen Eichy	5/13
Liesl Eng	5/14
Rowena Blsidell	5/15
Iwickson Este	5/15
Chase Pacupac	5/18
Shirley Lau	5/22
Ruby Au	5/24
Dwight Kokubun	5/15
May Chock	5/26
Helen Tom	5/26
Greg Smith	5/26
Marjory Tyau	5/28
Dorothy Jung	5/31
Jayden Shiroma	5/31

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+

St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
720 N. King Street
Honolulu, HI 96817

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A House of Prayer for all People

Return service requested



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Last call!

We will be printing a new Membership directory soon and want to make sure that everyone's picture is included. If you have not had your picture taken yet, please see **Tom Ishida** before or after the Sunday service.

Poem For An Elderly Saint

O merciless Heart,
beating still in a body
that each day
falls closer to dust;
bones aching,
flesh hanging
yet the merciless heart
beats on.
Martyrs it seems are
devoured
In arenas,
Hungry animals, wild
and biting,

Yet martyrs live too
To beyond ripened
Age
And suffering
Life

For faith's sake
Cry out
Like those of old
"help me,
help me...."



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Bulletin Oops! Years ago, the Sunday bulletin at Holy Nativity Episcopal Church invited the congregation to participate in the "Passing of the Peach."