

*"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

**April 2013**

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V Bishop of Hawaii

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Editor and Layout  
Music Consultant

Arleen Young  
Senior Warden

David Kleinschmidt,  
Junior Warden

Keith McCartney  
Secretary / Clerk

Heather Manning  
Treasurer

Website:  
[www.stelizabeth720.org](http://www.stelizabeth720.org)

Email:  
[stelizabethhawaii@gmail.com](mailto:stelizabethhawaii@gmail.com)

## Easter 2013

*The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector*

I'm not sure why you think you're here this morning.

For some, it may be a sense of family obligation.

For others perhaps it feels like habit and for others still a profound conviction that this is the only place to be this morning.

While I'm not sure why you think you're here this morning, I can tell you that no matter your own thoughts about your own motivations – I'm pretty sure the real reason you're here is because Jesus has called you in one way or another.

He's tapped you on the shoulder or swatted you on the behind or pinched your elbow and brought you to this place this morning.

You are all honored guests of Our Lord and I welcome you.

A few days ago, our friend James Fitzpatrick, St. E's intrepid youth outreach manager, got a call telling him that he won \$1 million in the Publisher's Home Clearinghouse Sweepstakes.

You know that one: Ed McMahon was the spokesman for years!

Well, James was terribly excited about this wonderful news but began to get suspicious when the folks who brought him this good news told him to hurry down to the nearest Wal-Mart and put \$400 on a debit card in their name.

Listening to James' story got me to wondering how many of us here today see Easter as something like that call that James received: really good news, but in the end, too good to be true.

After all, we all know that the dead stay dead.

It is in Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* where the playwright has vicious King Herod storming through the castle, yelling out that this Jesus must be found and told he is forbidden to raise anyone from the dead.

Because if the dead don't stay dead, then everything we've built our world on begins to shake.

All of our rules, all of our common sense, begins to look suspicious, even wrong.

The logic of our need for guns, the logic of national security, the logic of pension plans and safety, all of which are simply off-shoots of our fear of death, begin to tremble if the dead don't stay dead.

And let's be frank, we like the way things are.

We know the rules; and even if it's a dog eat dog world, at least we know how to bite!

Flannery O'Connor might be the greatest storyteller this country has ever produced.

She was a product of the Deep South and died at the too young age of 39, after penning dozens of remarkable short stories.

In one of those stories, she tells of a mom, dad, grandma, and two kids who have the misfortune of getting stuck in a remote area.

As it happens, their car breaks down just down the hill from where an escaped, psychopathic murderer is hiding out.

The murderer, nicknamed Misfit, starts killing off one member of the family after



# Rector's Message, continued

another.

The grandma appeals to Misfit to think of Jesus and to stop what he is doing.

This is what Misfit has to say:

“Jesus is the only one that was ever raised from the dead, and he shouldn't have done it.

He thrown everything off balance.

If he is who he said, then it's nothing for you to do but throw away everything and follow him, and if he isn't, then there's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can, by killing somebody or burning down his home or doing some other meanness to him.”

F. O'Connor, *A Good Man is Hard To Find*.

I can't think of a greater challenge to we comfortable, 21st century Americans, we who are all too often only nominally Christian, than the insight of the psychopathic killer in Ms. O'Connor's fiction.

C.S. Lewis said the same thing, but put it a bit more gently, when he insists that Christianity is either of no importance or it is of ultimate importance: the only thing it cannot be is of moderate importance.

And so we arrive this morning with Mary at the tomb.



The men, Peter and John, have come and gone.

She alone sits in her grief at the mouth of the empty tomb.

Until she looks to her left, and there are what seems for all the world to be angels sitting inside, saying something about Jesus

having gone on ahead, but it makes no sense, not the sight, nor the sounds.

She looks to the right, and there's the gardener, who she begs to return the body; she still cannot see, cannot hear, until the one who knows every hair on your head, who knows every breath that you take, the one who knows you by name, turns and says to her: “Mary!”

In that moment, the only world that she knows melts away, while a new world stands before her, wearing a gardener's hat and a tender smile.

In Jesus, God has turned the tables on us.

For thousands of years, humanity seeks out victims to lay upon our own sins, and in the death of the scapegoat, we receive a momentary sense of relief from our own lack.

Whether it was the practice of the ancient Jews who placed the sins of the community on an actual goat; or watching the bellicose North Koreans utter every sort of insanity at their Southern neighbors or our own national obsession with Sadaam Hussein or Iran; scapegoating, blaming the victim, is as old as Adam and Eve (“She told me to eat it!”, he said; “The snake told me to eat it!” she said.)

But in Jesus, the scapegoat, the victim, is God.

In Jesus, the scapegoat, the victim, is undeniably innocent.

As we stand before that innocence, God gives to us the grace to exchange compassion for revenge, understanding for anger, forgiveness for fear.

At the resurrection, the world shifts, and the flim flam that we have built to conceal the goodness and grace of creation begins to melt away.

You who are over 60 probably remember Whittaker Chambers, a State Department employee charged with being a Soviet spy during the paranoid 1950s.

In his autobiography he tells of a conversation he had with the daughter of a former German diplomat in Moscow who

# Rector's Message

tried to explain why her father, once so extremely pro-communist, had become deeply disillusioned with Stalin's regime.

"She loved her father," Chambers writes, "and the irrationality of his defection embarrassed her.

'He was immensely pro-Soviet,' she said, 'and then—you will laugh at me—but you must not laugh at my father—and then—one night—in Moscow—he heard screams.

That's all.

Simply one night, he heard screams."

(Bailie, *Violence Unveiled*, 35.)

All of his illusions about the Soviet system crumbled because of the seemingly powerless screams of the victim.

If we take seriously what brings us here this morning, we may find that all of our illusions of self-sufficiency, of power and of self-control—are at grave risk by the seemingly powerless death, and unnerving resurrection, of the victim named Jesus.

As the Misfit says: Jesus upsets everything.

There is one other thing I'd like to say to you today.

We live in times when Christianity has strayed far from the gospels, becoming almost a comic book version of our most base instincts.

It's not unusual to hear some evangelists nearly salivating at the thought of a second coming in which their group is rescued while the rest of the world endures unspeakable loss; and in the next breath insisting that you send in that fat donation right away.

This is not Christianity.

When Jesus tells us that he is the way, the truth and the life, he's not telling you to take a loyalty oath to Jesus or you're toast.

Instead, to say that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life is to recognize that the only way to the Living God is through the journey of the one who surrenders all that he is, in gracious self giving – since it is only in gracious self giving, even to death, death on a cross, that the nature of God is discovered and opened for us to enter.

That God wants each and every one of us; and that whether you know it or not; whether you believe it or not; Jesus is your companion along the way.

We are all of us God's children; whether we consider ourselves to be or not; whether we are churchgoers or not.

And it is the most treasured desire of God that God will have each and everyone one of us as his own.

Paul says exactly this in his letter today to the Corinthians when he insists that Jesus will put all enemies under his feet.

Too many rush to define these enemies as human beings: whether they be Muslims or Catholics or Jews or KKK members or Iranians or name your hated group: the popular sense is Jesus will

someday come to crush them.

That's not what Paul is saying at all.

It's not human beings that will be destroyed; it's the powers that corrupt all of us: like fear and hatred and envy and anger; all of which are the offspring of the greatest enemy, death.

These are the enemies of Jesus, and these are the things his resurrection has already started to destroy.

It is Easter.

*Jesus is on the loose,  
free  
from the tomb.*

*He's calling each of you by name,  
and  
whether by a tap on the shoulder  
or  
a swat on the butt  
or  
a pinch on your elbow,*

*today,  
Jesus invites you, and you and you  
to risk kindness  
when anger seems called for;  
to risk compassion  
when revenge seems most in order:  
and  
hearing the cry of the victim,  
who died for us,  
to risk even death  
in the hope that  
because Jesus died,  
we are shown the way into eternal life,  
beginning today,  
confident that in God  
the eternal life we enter into  
today,  
will never ever  
end.*

Happy Easter!





# Holy Week and Easter at St. Elizabeth's



Maundy Thursday began with the traditional washing of the feet as Fr. David and Mother Imelda recalled the life of service their ordination calls them to. Following the service the congregation joined with many friends and relatives of **Seine Lino** for the celebration of her 21st birthday!



The Easter Day service began with a beautiful oli by **Kama Wong**, now a 5th grader at Kamehameha School. The flame from the Paschal Candle followed, giving light to the congregation as **Steve Costa** carried the Paschal Candle up the aisle lighting the candles held by members of the congregation. (Thanks, **Tea Gierlach**, for putting all the paper holders onto the candles.) What a glorious service it was, filled with the alleluias of baptism, alleluias of the 5 first communion candidates and



the alleluias welcoming friends and family who overflowed into the back of the church and chapel. Baptized were **Enson Neeto, Anau Hiwahiwa Tokoma'ata, Bauantusa Sadate, Makai Joseph Langford, Jah`zeyah Akuakane La`akea Aquino** and **Megumi Mai Takushi**. Reaffirming their baptismal vows were **Suzanne Langford** and **Rich Langford**.

Excitement certainly was in the air. There were no Sunday School classes but the kids were eager for the BIG Easter Egg hunt at the end of the service. The Youth prepared 32 baskets





Look at all the colorful Easter baskets filled with goodies!

for the kids, organized and hid 90+ hard-boiled eggs (Thanks to **Christine Ling** and **Juliet Ling** for all the eggs!) and 144 plastic eggs... that's 234 eggs + 1 golden egg = 235 altogether. And that's just the hidden ones! Every child found some eggs and got a basket with a stuffed animal in it. Congratulations to Stanley who found the golden egg. All the kids got even more eggs and candies in their baskets and the 25 kids 12 and older got sacks of goodies and participated in a really fun scavenger hunt. Thank you for all your donations to make this the best egg hunt and scavenger hunt ever. The Youth are already planning for 2014! Thanks to **James Fitzpatrick, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Leyna Esaki, Troy Esaki, Villiami Lino** and **Seine Lino**.



Plenty of food for everyone.



# Born to Eternal Life

**Eunice Hughes**, March 12, 2013. Service was held at Hawaiian Memorial Park on March 28.

**Hermenegilda Sarceda**, March 18, 2013. Service will be held at St. Elizabeth's on April 5.

**Bertha Chong**, March 20, 2013. Service will be held at Borthwick Mortuary on Maunakea Street on April 20th. Viewing at 11:00; service at noon.

*Lord, you consoled Martha and Mary in their distress; draw near to us who mourn and dry the tears of those who weep. You wept at the grave of Lazarus, your friend; comfort us in our sorrow. Father of all, we pray to you for all those whom we love but see no longer. Grant to them eternal rest. Let light perpetual shine upon them. May the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

## Thank You, Deacon Steve Costa!



On Easter Day, we bid a fond Aloha to our deacon-in-training, **Steve Costa**, who fulfilled his 6 month assignment at St. E. The Sunday School youth will certainly miss him! The children presented Steve with a cross made by **Lisa-Anne Mitsuka Chan** and **Brenson Felix** represented the children and read a poem to him.



## Happy Birthday

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

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| Mother Imelda Padasdao   | 4/1  |
| Shawnalyn Sunagawa       | 4/2  |
| Brillan Tulenkun         | 4/2  |
| Sharon Oshiro            | 4/3  |
| Kit Hawkins              | 4/6  |
| Ka'alaneo Blaisdell-Higa | 4/6  |
| Concisa Bartoline        | 4/7  |
| Joelynne Tagle           | 4/7  |
| Father David Gierlach    | 4/8  |
| Tasy Robert              | 4/8  |
| Santereen Kom            | 4/9  |
| Dolores Peralta          | 4/10 |
| Alberta Eng              | 4/11 |
| Belinda Chung            | 4/12 |
| Flora Wong               | 4/12 |
| Joseph Tom               | 4/14 |
| Michael Young            | 4/14 |
| Lauren Ho                | 4/16 |
| Puanani Woo              | 4/17 |
| Kenneth Nagamine         | 4/18 |
| Juan Ramos               | 4/22 |
| Ellen Tom                | 4/25 |
| Craig Kokubun            | 4/25 |
| Joey Gierlach            | 4/28 |
| Gilbert Batangan         | 4/29 |
| Richard Ching            | 4/30 |
| Lily Ho                  | 4/30 |

## The Journey Prayer

God, bless to me this day, God bless to me this night; Bless, O bless, Thou God of grace, Each day and hour of my life; Bless, O bless, Thou God of grace, Each day and hour of my life.

God, bless the pathway on which I go; God, bless the earth that is beneath my sole; Bless, O God, and give to me Thy love, O God of gods, bless my rest and my repose; Bless, O God, and give to me Thy love, And bless, O God of gods, my repose.

*St. Brendan the Voyager (484-577) Irish*



## Want to Bake Communion Bread?

Want to learn to bake bread—specifically our Communion wafers? **Mary Ann and Preston Lentz** welcome you to join them in their kitchen on a Saturday morning—or they will come to YOUR kitchen! From setup to cleanup it takes them 2 hours. It’s a simple process and an easy recipe. Thank you to **Sarah Bush** who does the baking once each month as well.



## Rag Dolls 2Love

The 1st Sunday  
in Easter, April  
7th we will bless  
the final set of  
RagDolls2Love.

What a journey it is has been! The Ragdolls were to be sent to a unit which originally distributed the dolls in Mosul in 2005, but their latest mission has changed and they have new assignments that do not include Afghanistan anytime soon.

Where these dolls will travel to, we do not know, but we do know they will go with blessings from the congregation of St. E’s as little ambassadors of Aloha! These latest set of ragdolls have been made by the sewing group ladies at St. Elizabeth’s.

## The Passion of the Lord

Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, the tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God before you.”

So are all the groups we love to hate. They didn’t believe it then; we don’t believe it now.

The chief priests and elders “plotted to arrest Jesus in some sly way and kill him.”

After thirty years of total obscurity, then three years of prophetic ministry, it’s the beginning of the end.

At the last supper “a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be the greatest.”

At the Last Supper?

Does our vanity know no boundaries?

“I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.”

Judas plays our part and takes our place.

“One by one they said to him, ‘surely not I?’”

Yes, it surely is.

“This very night you will all fall away on account of me.”

Despite all the protests, no one is excepted.

Peter: “Even if all fall away, I never will, even if I have to go to prison with you and die with you.”

Enthusiasm without enlightenment spells disaster.

“And all the other disciples said the same.”

Which means that Judas is unexceptional.

“What is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.”

Divine fulfillment, not political fate.

In Gethsemane, “all the disciples deserted him and fled.”

Now utterly alone in the world.

“Every day I was in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour — when darkness reigns.”

Some times it is darkest just before the light.

The high priest asked, “are you the Christ, the Son of God?”

Yes. Full stop.

-Dan Clendenin





"Don't sweat it - We grade on the curve."



## We See a Gardener

Risen Lord, so often encountered, so seldom recognized,  
 you meet us in the gardens of our hearts, on the lonely roads of  
 our lives, our empty beaches, and greet us.  
 But in our blindness, we mistake you for someone else.  
 Throughour tears, we see a gardener; in our weariness and  
 wariness, a stranger.  
 But you call us back to ourselves.  
 Forgive us our hard-heartedness,  
 our lack of understanding.  
 Open our eyes and our ears to you, wherever you are found,  
 and give us grace to love you with abandon,  
 to throw ourselves into your service,  
 As Mary threw herself at your feet,  
 as Peter threw himself into the sea. Amen.

—Ms. Jennifer Heckart



"Nice sermon. Not too preachy."

## 'Like' us on FaceBook!



St. Elizabeth's now has a FaceBook page and all are encouraged to 'Like' us for the latest news and pictures of the parish and its people. You can find us at <http://www.facebook.com/StElizabetsEpiscopalChurch>.

Please feel free to share your pictures and news on our FaceBook page.



## Attendance

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Sunday, March 3             | 160 |
| Wednesday, March 6          | 14  |
| Sunday, March 10            | 157 |
| Wednesday, March 13         | 23  |
| Sunday, March 17            | 172 |
| Wednesday, March 20         | 25  |
| Sunday, March 24            | 187 |
| Wednesday, March 27         | 24  |
| Maundy Thursday, March 28   | 115 |
| Good Friday, March 29, noon | 35  |
| Good Friday, March 29, 6 pm | 40  |
| Easter Day, March 31        | 273 |