

"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

August 2013

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

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Parish Administrator
Editor and Layout
Music Consultant

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Who Do We Believe?

The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector

The latest polls show almost 1 in 5 Americans believe President Obama is a Muslim.

He is not.

But it led one fellow to question in a news article: who is a Christian?

Christians these days seem to come in so many shapes and varieties, it's a fair question to ask: "As Christians, what do we believe?"

A couple of folks interviewed church members across the country, and this is what they came up with.

After interviewing thousands of church members, they discovered that most believe something like this: Call it a 5-point belief plan, or a 5-point plan for short.

1. God created the world and watches over life on earth.
2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other as the bible and other religions teach.
3. The central goal in life is to be happy and feel good about yourself.
4. God is not involved in my life except when I need God to solve a problem.
5. Good people go to heaven when they die.

In fact, a great number of professing Christians, particularly among our young people, believe that this 5-point plan sums

up our faith.

Perhaps the reason that so many believe this way is because too many clergy preach the shallow, hollowed out version of Christianity that the 5 point plan represents.

In truth, the 5-point plan has little to do with faith in Jesus Christ.

The 5 point plan describes a life where, most of the time, we are on our own, where God steps in, occasionally, but only when there is an emergency; and where the goal of life is to be happy, to be nice, and when we die, to go to heaven.

But Christianity is not this.

At the heart of Christianity is a God so intimately involved in our daily lives that we cannot escape him; at the office, at the school desk, or at home in bed.

Allow me to quote:

"You trace my journeys and my resting places and know all my ways.

There is not a word on my lips, but you Lord, know it all together. ***

If I climb to the heavens you are there, if I make the grave my bed, you are there also."



Rector's Message, continued

So says the Psalmist who points to a very different relationship with God than today's 5-point plan.

"If I take wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand will lead me; and your right hand hold me fast." [Ps. 139]

This is the God of our faith, not the small "g" god of the 5-point plan.

At the heart of Christianity is also paradox.

The 5-point plan is all about doing good and being rewarded.

About fitting in.

About not rocking the boat.

But to follow Jesus is to enter a world where the 5-point plan is turned on its head.

God chooses the losers, the outcasts, the most unlikely scallywags to join the Kingdom's parade.

Rather than "nice" being rewarded with "nice", the Kingdom is promised to the poor; the earth is promised to the gentle; comfort is promised to the mourners; and mercy to those who show mercy.

While the 5 point plan describes a faith of getting out in proportion to what one puts in; faith in Christ is all about free gifts, generously given; from a God who wants us not because of what we have, but who loves us for what we lack.

So, we bring empty hands to receive, we present empty wombs that are filled, and we discover an empty tomb, the sign of resurrection.

Faith in the God of Jesus Christ is not about being nice and going to heaven.

We hear what our faith is today as the teenager, Jeremiah, in fear and trembling, hears God insist that he knew the lad before he was born.

He called the boy before he was even conceived.

And he sent this boy to announce true faith to Kings and CEOs; to politicians and priests.

"To pluck up and to pull down, to build and to plant."

Jeremiah objected.

"I am only a boy!"

"I cannot go!"

"I am afraid!"

And in response, God thunders: "Do not be afraid, for I am with you...!"

So says God to Jeremiah.

So says God to you and I.

Jeremiah is sent as you and I are sent.

Our baptism is not for ourselves.

Our baptism is for us to go and do: to being good news to the poor, sight to the blind, healing to the lame.

This is the call of our faith, to go out into the world and be, in our daily lives, the hands and feet and eyes and ears of Christ.

And there are more holes in the 5-point plan.

In the 5-point plan, God himself is nice, becomes "manageable", becomes someone to be at ease with.

The 5 point plan misses entirely the God of mystery and power and otherness; the God who, while deeply engaged with us; also wholly different from us.

The Letter to the Hebrews today reminds of that mystery; of blazing fire, of



In Kenya Father David took this picture of the Red Cross interns after they completed their HIV/AIDS training session.

Rector's Message, continued

darkness, of tempest, of awe. Fr. Robert Capon reminds me of this mystery.

“When we try to describe God”, he says, “we are like oysters trying to describe a ballerina.”

The 5-point plan misses the mystery of God. Jesus goes a long way in summing up true faith when he healed, without being asked, the poor bent over woman.

He healed in the church.

He healed on the Sabbath.

He healed for free.

And the woman responded as one hopes you and I would respond to such an unexpected, unearned, gift: she rejoiced!

She gave thanks to God!

Jesus has nothing to do with the 5 point plan.

He wasn't nice when the church leader began scolding others also seeking healing to come back another day.

“You hypocrites!” he called them.

He pointed out how the 5-point planners treat their animals better than a human being in need.

Jesus shamed them.

He embarrassed them.

No, Jesus wasn't “nice”.

Jesus doesn't call us to be “nice.”

He calls us to be holy.

He calls us to be faithful.

Not in some future state in heaven, but today, here, now!

So today, if you feel a 5-point plan growing into your life, cut it out, throw it away, be done with it.

Embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, where, in order to receive, we must become empty, in order to have, we must surrender; in order to live, we must die to self, die to common sense, die to what the world calls wise.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is the faith of Christ.

It is not for the faint of heart.

But if you choose to come along, you'll be in for the ride of your life!

+amen

Fr. David will be on sabbatical from May 28 to September 1st.

For pastoral emergencies, please contact Mother Imelda Padasdao at 256-9277.

The Reckless Rector

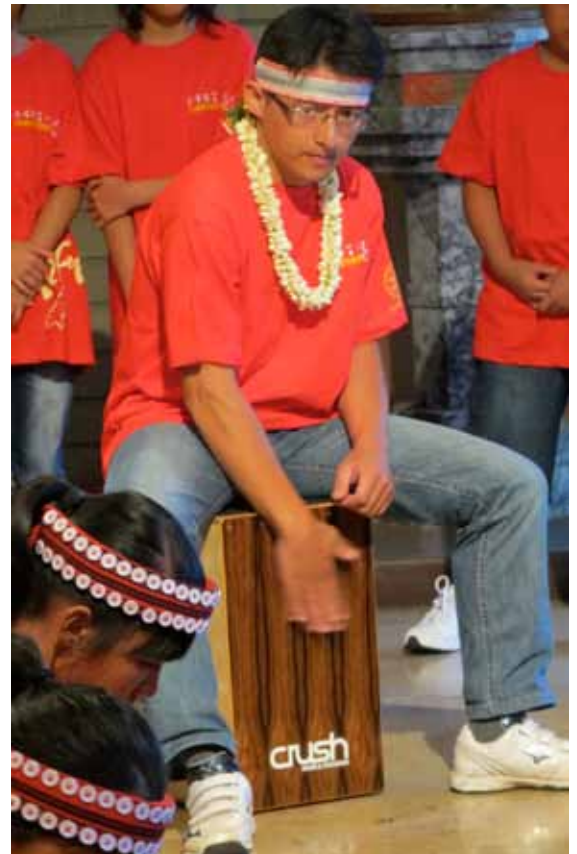
If you'd like to keep up with Father David and find out what adventures he's having on his sabbatical, you can read his blog. Go onto the St. Elizabeth's website, www.stelizabeth720.org and click **The Reckless Rector** link on the home page.

“The redemption myths try unhistorically to find an eternity after death....[For them] redemption means redemption from cares, distress, fears, and longings, from sin and death, in a better world beyond the grave. But is this really the essential character of the proclamation of Christ in the gospels? I should say it is not. The difference between the Christian hope of resurrection and the mythological hope is that Christian hope sends one back into life on earth in a wholly new way....The Christian, unlike the devotees of the redemption myths, has no last line of escape available from the earthly tasks, ..., but like Christ himself, she must drink the earthly cup to the dregs and only in her doing so is the crucified and risen Lord with her, and she crucified and risen with Christ. This world must not be prematurely written off. On this, the Old and New Testament are at one.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Summer is A-Buzz at St. E's



Mini-Concert and Potluck Brunch

The Tayal Tribe from Taiwan, 18 students and 9 adults shared their music, dance and costumes with us on Sunday, July 21st. The Principal of the School, the Vice-Principal and two teachers were part of the group. As part of their fundraiser, they also sold handmade craft items, music CDs, and baked goods after the concert. The students came from Wufeng Elementary School in Taiwan for a one week stay in Hawaii.

Ajaon Chen's sister helped coordinate their visit to Hawaii and was on tour with the group. What a wonderful morning of music and dance! After the mini-concert, everyone shared in the potluck

brunch. Thank you to all who so generously shared your food and fellowship at the brunch and to **Nora Kurosu** and **Lynette Shim** who coordinated the great group of helpers serving the pot-luck food. The experience was one these Taiwan students will not soon forget!



Youth News

by James Fitzpatrick

It has been a busy summer for the youth of St. Elizabeth's. A car wash, a basketball season, church camp, and other activities have made for a very memorable summer. Our two basketball teams participated in Palama Settlement's **Late Night Basketball League**. The junior team had 14 players participate in eleven games, and ended the season with a five wins and six losses. The senior team also had 14 players that participated in nine games. They ended the season with three wins and six losses. These twenty-eight youth practiced twice a week for seven weeks. Hard work, commitment to practices, and teamwork helped both teams represent St. Elizabeth's extremely well.



around six hundred dollars. This money will go to helping the basketball team get the supplies and resources that are needed to have a successful program. Thank you to everyone who came out to support us. We will be having another car wash on **August 3** from 8 in the morning to 1 in the afternoon. Pre-sale tickets will be available for purchase from James Fitzpatrick. Hope to see you there.



Tongan Youth Group Dances

Hui Pu, the Episcopal Youth Church Camp, took place at Camp Mokuleia. We had a large group of youth participate in both the camp for high school students as well as the camp for middle school students. Thanks to the Chinese Christian Association's generous donation we were able to send so many of our youth.



Car Washes. On June 29th from nine in the morning until two in the afternoon the St. Elizabeth's youth group and the Tongan youth group washed cars in the parking lot of St. Elizabeth's. From ticket sales, donations, the garage sale, and cars coming for the car wash we raised



The Tongan Youth showed off their colorful costumes and dances on Sunday, July 28th.

Why I Pledge

by *Stuart Ching*

I was baptized at St. Elizabeth's over half a century ago. While growing up, words like "thy," "thou," and "thee" were part of the regular church vocabulary. Emotion-filled phrases, such as "we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness," were recited every Sunday to remind us of the omnipotence of God's divine mercy. It was pure poetry in words, and our liturgical worship was poetry in action. It was what distinguished us as members of the Anglican Communion.



The traditional language of the Anglican Church is seldom used now at St. Elizabeth's, and the rubrics governing Church services have changed. But, what has not changed is the commitment of St. Elizabeth's to offer a warm welcome to everyone in the community and a helping hand to those in need. What has resulted is a multi-ethnic congregation in which Chuukese, Filipino, and Tongan voices are raised in song on Sunday mornings; a youth program that is bulging at the seams; numerous outreach programs that address community needs; and national church recognition, in the form of a personal visit by the Presiding Bishop last year and our recent designation as a Jubilee Parish. Through my pledging I am pleased to support the mission of St. Elizabeth's knowing that my contribution is making a difference in people's lives.

Sunday School News

by *Sue Yap*

Sunday School resumes on August 25th! The students have had a very busy summer and Preston has been training our junior acolytes – **Kama Wong, Nathan Neeto, Kevin and Makai Langford.** (They are fast learners... one Sunday Kama and Makai had a lesson on lighting a match!)

Thank you all for all your support in our back-to-school backpacks and school supplies drive that has kept **James Fitzpatrick, Sarah Kleinschmidt** and our young people very busy looking for the best sales and checking off those school supply lists for at least 70 kids – from pre-Kindergarten to high school! And on the list of every grade – a backpack! Thank you all for bringing in school supplies and your generous monetary donations! James and Sarah will distribute the school supplies before school begins,

HCAP Ha Initiative STEM Program continues in the adjoining Shim Hall classrooms with a new program manager, **Justin Pequerno.** He is working with 25 students and 3 volunteers. Ha Initiative is a year round program, meeting Mondays through Fridays from 2:30 to 5:50 pm, Wednesdays they start at 1:30 pm. The program is a *free* comprehensive science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) focused after-school program for youth. If you know of any interested students, grades 2 to 8, who would like to participate, applications are at the center. (The parent does need to go with the child to register.) Some of the Sunday School students also participate in this program. The program is always open to more students, mentors and volunteers. The children go on field trips, work on the computers, participate in the LEGO robotics league (they are called 'Palamabots') and during the school year they also do their homework. Interested — please contact Justin at the center or call 521-4531.

Not only have the students been busy, the teachers have also been busy! **Mrs. Doris Lam** and **Miss Jamie Chock** have been busy in the garden — seeding, planting, watering with gloves and hats and praying that the chickens and wandering critters do not disturb their plantings!

One of the highlights of the summer for many of the children is fellowship at Camp Mokuleia, one week for the high school kids and one long weekend for the middle school kids. **Viliani Lino**, who was a counselor with the high school kids was a big hit with all the kids and adults. Thanks, James, for getting the grant scholarships from CCA for the kids and thanks to Viliani – the kids have certainly 'grown'!

We are ready for Sunday School, come August 25th!

Born to Eternal Life



Lina Jeong Doo

March 18, 1951 – July 12, 2013

A Requiem Eucharist for Lina Doo was celebrated on July 27th at St. Elizabeth's, with The Rev. Canon Franklin S. H. Chun presiding, The Rev. Imelda S. Padasdao and The Rev. Peter S. M. Fan assisting. Lina was

for many years the music director at St. Elizabeth's and we extend our deepest sympathy to her family.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though this body be destroyed, yet shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger.



*There is only
room for 20
students!*



After School Orchestra Program

will begin September 9 through May 2014 at St. Elizabeth's. This *entirely FREE* music program will meet two hours a day, four days a week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) where students will learn how to play stringed instruments (violin, viola and cello) and will sing in a chorus. Lessons and the use of the instruments are FREE. Playing in an intensive music ensemble will help your child learn music AND change their lives through the discipline, focus and community created by music.

Application forms are available in the office. All who register **MUST** attend our organizational meeting for parents and students on **Saturday, September 7** at 10 am.

*“God is not an object that we must love, but rather,
God is a mystery present in the very act of love itself.”*

—Peter Rollins

There is the story of a pastor who got up one Sunday and announced to his congregation: “I have good news and bad news. The good news is, we have enough money to pay for our new building program. The bad news is, it’s still in your pockets.”



**Happy
Birthday**
*God's blessings on
those with
August birthdays!*

Renza Farek	8/2
Sue Yap	8/4
Pablo Venenciano	8/4
Nicholas Chung	8/5
Wayne Pacupac	8/6
Raymond Leong	8/8
Maxwell Starkman	8/9
Sean Padasdao	8/11
Akiu Chock	8/11
David Hirashiki	8/13
Linda Woo	8/13
Elyjah Badua	8/13
Man Love Sos	8/14
Etta Leong	8/15
Simter Robert	8/16
Harold Ware	8/17
Keith Ho	8/17
Jo Ann Young	8/17
Patsy Ann Ching	8/18
Reden Ramos Ho	8/18
Douglas Ing	8/18
Kaitlin Nagamine	8/18
Karen Batangan	8/19
Caren Jean Esaki	8/20
Marietta Ware	8/20
Pedro Timonio	8/20
Joel Jong	8/21
Nancy Au	8/21
Francis Kau	8/21
Joshua Lino	8/22
Jaden Morey	8/22
Jeferrson Noket	8/22
Madleen Michael	8/24
Jarrett Young	8/25
Iluminada Padasdao	8/25
Inaria Repaky	8/25

Welcome to the Lord's Family



Bishop Robert Fitzpatrick baptized **Rhian Daphne Timonio**, daughter of Randy Timonio and Danica Salvador, on July 28th.



Attendance

Sunday, June 30	158
Wednesday, July 3	44
Sunday, July 7	181
Wednesday, July 10	23
Sunday, July 14	158
Wednesday, July 17	21
Sunday, July 21	160
Wednesday, July 24	25
Sunday, July 28	171

REQUIEM EUCHARIST

THE REV. GERHARD LAUN

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7 † 9:30 AM
ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL

NO RECEPTION WILL FOLLOW THE SERVICE



THE FORMER RECTOR OF
ST. ELIZABETH'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH,

THE REV. GERHARD LAUN

PASSED AWAY IN SAN MARCOS, CA
ON JULY 7TH, 2013

HE SERVED ST. ELIZABETH'S
FROM 1990 TO 2003,
SUCCEEDING

THE REV. DR. GERALD G. GIFFORD.

BORN AND EDUCATED IN GERMANY AND THE
UNITED KINGDOM, FR. LAUN HAD PREVIOUSLY
SERVED EPISCOPAL PARISHES
IN OKLAHOMA AND UTAH.



Saturday, August 3rd

8:00 am to 1:00 pm

\$7 per car

Pre-sales \$5 from James Fitzpatrick

Scholarships for College



While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage. On the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign... "Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust."

A note for the high school seniors and graduates — there are scholarships available for the next school year. You need to submit your application by August 31st. Applications are available from the church office or see **Patsy Ching.**