

"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 2014

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Right Between the Eyes

By The Rev. David J. Gierlach

Sometimes when Jesus really gets going, he reminds me of the old Rocky movies, with jabs and upper cuts and roundhouse punches so fast you don't see them coming.

Today's gospel is one of those.

Right out of the chute, Jesus starts it coming fast and furious.

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed that's practically invisible until it grows into a tree, he says....without giving us a chance to catch our breath and say hey, but mustard is a weed that nobody likes; it gets planted not on purpose but through oversight, because you can't see the danged thing hidden in with what we planned to plant, and besides, it's not a tree, it's an ugly oversized bush.

Nope, Jesus gives us time for none of that, because now he's on a new track with a different angle on the kingdom of God: this time he's talking yeast, except he's not talking Fleishmanns in the nice yellow Safeway packet, he's talking leaven, which, as you who love San Francisco know, is nothing more than a small piece of old dough stuck in a dark hole until it gets really moldy and is then tucked in to new flour to make new bread...it's said every loaf of San Fran's famous sourdough has a piece of the original —made over 100 years ago...(which is a little disgusting when you think about it....) and not only that, the gal Jesus has making bread does it with three measures of flour, which, at first glance,

seems to finally get us back to normal for a moment, until we realize that three measures are not three cups of flour, three measures is 50 pounds of flour.



Enough, with that rotten leaven hidden inside, to grow so large that her whole village will have plenty to eat; yet for the Jewish people, the folks making up Jesus' audience, leaven is corrupt, unclean, filthy.... which is a heck of a thing to compare the Kingdom of God to, which, if he gave us a moment, we would mention to him, except, he's off to the races again.

Now he's talking about the kingdom as a fella who's found loot on someone else's land, hides the loot, buys the land and lives happily ever after...but wait a sec Jesus, why's that trespasser messing around on private property that isn't his, and, while we're at it, how dare he take something from land he doesn't own, hide it, then bamboozle the owner by failing to disclose all material facts of the transaction?????

We are a law abiding people, aren't we Jesus????

But he's got no time for our objection, because now he's comparing God's kingdom to a pearl among pearls, so that the used pearl salesman sells everything she has to have it, but before we can mutter a word about common sense and balanced portfolios and not putting all your eggs in one basket, he's off to that great fish haul where the dragnet brings up rusty cans and sweet ahi and clams and tires and weeds and rocks and lobster and you name it, all of it getting dragged to the shore — and this

Rector's Message, continued

great dragnet that hauls in the whole world, and everything living in it.

Well, this too is what the kingdom of God is like; except, if only he'd give us a moment, we would point out that this looks an awful lot like God seeking us out rather than us seeking out God, and while we're at it, doesn't God have more discriminating taste than to haul in every last one of us???

Phew

So there we have it.

What is the kingdom of God like?

Why, it's like a weed or moldy dough, it's like a thief or a used car salesman, it's like everything a net can drag in from the sea.

If you want to say it in the language of 2014, if you want to feel the same kind of wallop to the chin those first listeners felt, well then maybe you'd say:

"The kingdom of God is like a virus in a dirty needle that a junkie took and injected into a vein so the whole body was infected."
-Laurel Dykstra.

Or as a woman dying of breast cancer put it:

"The kingdom of God is like cancer that invaded a woman's breast until it had consumed all of her, even in her Sunday finery."
-Scott, *Reimagine The World*, 34.

Nasty stuff to our ears, but no nastier than comparing the kingdom to weeds or mold or a dragnet to the ears of first century Jews.

Last week my wife sent me a video about humanists.

The video said humanists don't believe in life after death; and it went on to talk about life after death consisting of a disembodied soul going off to a cloudy place to play a harp all day long.

I laughed, because our faith doesn't believe such a thing either, although in the popular imagination, that's exactly what a whole lot of folks seem to believe.

Jesus tells his odd parables, his offensive parables, comparing weeds and mold and thieves and unsavory characters and drug addicts and cancer to the Kingdom of God perhaps to shake us up enough to realize that our own sentimental fantasies about the who and what and wherefores of God are often completely off the mark.

That the point of a Christian life is not to keep our nose clean so we can play a harp for forever, but that the point of the Christian

life is to become workers in God's kingdom TODAY, on earth as in heaven, where the fields are ripe for harvest, but please God, send more laborers

All through these parables, Jesus keeps insisting that we LISTEN

And yet:

Listening to Jesus is hard because you run the risk of having to change the way you see the world.

"It seems we would sooner kill him than listen to him." Zia Rahman. (modified).

And kill him we did, but thankfully, God refuses to take our NO for an answer.

In these parables, perhaps Jesus is telling us that God really does love, desire, want, the whole wide world, and every Tom, Dick and Harriet who ever lived in it.

In these parables, perhaps Jesus is telling us that while soaring Cathedrals and magnificent cedar trees are all well and good, the place God most readily makes her home is here, among the regular folks, especially the most needy, the least cared for, the ugly and the poor; and since that is where God makes God's home, the church, the visible sign of God in the world, well, maybe that's where we need to make our home too.

Just as the thief bought the whole entire field, and not just the small piece where he buried the treasure, so too the church "if it can't bring itself to buy all sorts and conditions of human beings — white and nonwhite, male and female, smart and stupid, good and bad, spiritual and nonspiritual — if we can't do that, why, we can't even begin to pretend" to be God's visible sign on earth. -R. Capon, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, 116. (modified).

My hope for you, my hope for me, is that we all of us stagger out of here today, perhaps a bit bruised, perhaps a bit shaken up, by the stunning news that what we so often hold in contempt turns out to be the very apple of God's eye.

Rector's Message, continued

And if you can see that truth, hidden in the most ordinary people, places and things, then “you are now trained for the kingdom of heaven, and you, like the master, can bring out of your treasure what is new and what is old.”

+amen

Baptism

Please welcome into the Lord's Family: **Adrian Rose Cole**, daughter of John and Naomi Cole, and sponsored by **Troy Esaki**, was baptized on July 20th.



And on July 27th, **Kayli Michiko Ramos Ho**, daughter of **Keith and Reden Ho**, was baptized. Godparents are **Sarah Monje, Chrisolm Ramos, Maria Ruthella Ramos, Kellen Ho, Lynnsey Puahala**, and **Lauren Ho** Goldsmith.



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
Merex Julio	8/26



listened to our dad when this event held back in 2010. His vision was for us Pacific Islanders to be exposed as much as we could to the National Event because that is where he experienced a lot of stuff in his life. I saw what he meant when I was there. It was an eye opener, an experience of a lifetime and a good story to pass on to our next high school students to have dreams for and long to go to the event in 2018.

According to Joshua, “Villanova University was huge, and I was lost so many times during the workshops which were held in different places. This is where the opening ceremony was held with the Presiding Bishop speaking.

Episcopal Youth Event in Philly!

by *Viliani Lino*

I was glad to be one of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawaii’s chaperones joining hands with St. Elizabeth’s representatives for the Episcopal Youth Event in the National Level at Philadelphia, 2014.

Nunia Ikavuka, Mounika Langi, Siosua Lino, Simo Singeuo and **Saimon Singeuo** all said together with me, “We

want to join the EYE Tour, four years from now in 2018!” Unfortunately, they will be out of High School and not be eligible for the next tour. For me personally, it was an eye opener, my first experience of attending the National Level Youth Event. Actually I enjoyed myself more than the participants, I think. There was a total of 1,200 participants from 35 Dioceses all over United States who participated in the event held every four years.

I grew up in Fiji, and saw my dad hosting a similar event in Fiji for the Diocese of Polynesia from New Zealand, Samoa, Fiji, Tuvalu and Tonga. The EYE was hilarious! I wished my sister and I had



Looking forward to seeing the leaders of our church, I went to a music workshop which questioned *Why we sing in Church, To be and not to be confirmed, The Fun Workshop, The Forgiveness, Irish Dancing Workshop, New Direction* and others.

The hard part of the trip was the Urban Mission,





where we made 866 boxes, 30 pounds each, of food for the homeless.

The next day was the Church's mission, and we had to reinstall and fix tombstones that fell three years ago. These tombs have been in the church's cemetery for more than 100 years. The people left in the church were seniors

and they could not do it. We also went to the old people's home to trim hedges and were there for 2 days. Our treat after the Urban Mission was to stay at the hotel. Simo and Saimon took pictures of their bed, drawers etc. We then went sightseeing the next day and then to Lancaster to see the Amish Place. It reminded me of Tonga, with everyone running around with no shoes, and people cooking over an open fire.

Simo and Saimon said, "We enjoyed meeting new people and making new friends. We also saw things that we have never seen before; it was a good experience, and everyone was very excited." Simo said, "I wish there were 2-4 Simos, so I could manage to grab all the opportunities that EYE had to offer. It was an eye opener and was a very high experience. My brother and I would not sleep the day we arrived; we kept on talking about our trip to our family. My mom and dad were happy to hear of our new discoveries."

Nunia was very excited about the historical places that we visited like the Independence Hall, where she sat at the Abraham Lincoln chairs, the Liberty Bell, and the First Bank in America. We had very good food and plenty of choices. It was very hot and humid but we loved the trip. Good Trip Though.

On behalf of the EYE delegation of St. Elisabeth, I would like to thank each and everyone of the Parishioners who made contributions towards our trip moneywise, gift cards, checks and donations. We all appreciated your effort and time. Thank you for thinking of us in this time we needed your help. I would like to express my gratitude and a big Mahalo to our Tongan and Micronesian family for your help too. Also thanks to our young youth who stood by our side while we did car washes and yard work. Your contributions will always be treasured in our hearts.



Mahalo No, Malo aupito, Kinison, Vinaka Vakalevu, Viliami Lino.





Sunday School begins on **August 24th, 9:00 am!** Students, report to classroom A if you don't know where to go. We always welcome help from our young adults and adults! Please consider volunteering once a month.

From the Stewardship Chair

by Donovan Young

Sunday School News

Sunday School resumes on **Sunday, August 24, 2014.** Children, come and meet new friends and old! Classroom teachers, **Jamie Chock** and **Lillian Tyau** will teach the children ages 3 - 6 in Classroom B. **Sue Yap, Sarah Kleinschmidt,** and **Heather Manning** teach children ages 7 -12 in Classroom A. Resource crafts teacher **Mrs. Doris Lam,** will share two projects with the children this school year! Music teacher **Miss Ajaon,** will work with the children on the 4th Sunday of each month. The middle and high school students meet with **Mrs. Fane Lino, Miss Seine,** and **James Fitzpatrick** in Shim Hall. Many of the children, ages 12 and older, also have trained with **Preston Lentz** and serve as acolytes.

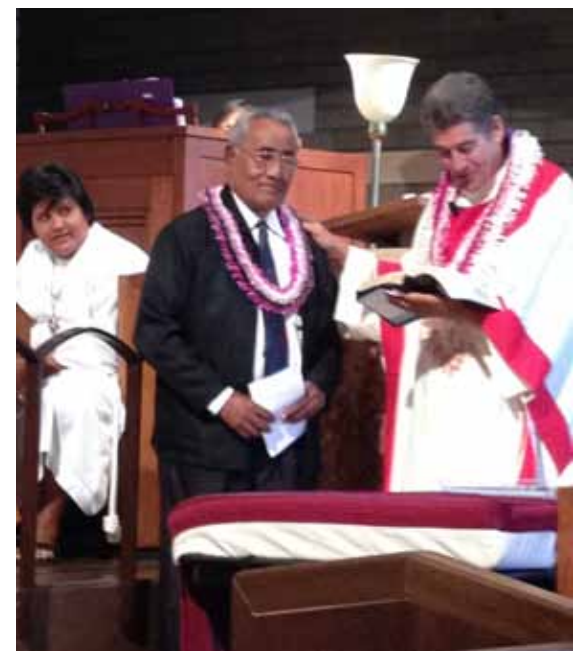
This school year, we will use *Feasting on The Word* curriculum. The teachers are very excited with this curriculum that is designed to encourage cooperative learning. Children will experience scripture through storytelling, drama, and a variety of activities that appeal to various learning styles.

Thank you all who participated and supported our youth this summer who made the long trek to the east coast, Philly! They shared with other diocesan youth not only the *doxology*, singing it in Hawaiian! Impressive! They all have many stories to share!

Thank you to all who helped with the back-to-school drive! Your generous monetary donations and school supplies help our children get off to a great school year. Thanks to **Fane Lino, Seine Lino, Viliami Lino, James Fitzpatrick, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Rebecca Kleinschmidt** and **Leyna Esaki** for spear-heading the collection, purchasing and creative distribution to students entering Pre-K through high school! Every year the list gets longer--the list of children needing school supplies and the school supply list!

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: It's that time of the year when we come to inform you that we are again participating in the Foodland **Give Aloha** program beginning in September. Details of this program will be made available to you at our weekly Sunday services, in the published *Vine and Branches* or e-newsletter from Father David. It is fitting that the popular jingle of Foodland is: *Food, Family and Friends*, much like our St. Elizabeth Parish Community. I once again ask you to participate in this event to help support our Parish.

Happy Birthday!



Viliami Langi celebrated his 79th birthday at St. Elizabeth's. (Photo: Sue Yap)



Help with College

The **Scholarship Fund** was established to encourage and assist church members to continue their education beyond high school. We also wish to recognize those students who have made significant contributions to St. Elizabeth's church. It is our hope that all recipients will continue to take an active role in the life of this Parish.

We are looking for students who are active members of St. Elizabeth's for a minimum of six months, and can show evidence of admission or enrollment in college as a full-time student.

Applications are now available through the church office or through **Patsy Ching**. Deadline is **August 25th, 2014** for the school year 2014-2015.



Spaghetti Dinners

"It was a blast and a half for the July Spaghetti Dinner that turned into a heavenly banquet with more food than you can imagine, from delicious potato salad to fresh fish to melons galore to clams to salads and of course the mouth watering spaghetti sauce prepared by chef Frederick!

Please join us for the next fellowship Friday set for **August 29th**, where we hope to have several mah jongg tables up and running (don't tell the police...) and our favorite trio, the **Andrews Sisters** leading us in song!"

Visitors from New Caledonia



Visitors from New Caledonia shared their music during the Offertory and Communion on July 13th.



We had the great opportunity to host some 45 friends from New Caledonia in Shim Hall for about two weeks. Here on a cultural exchange, they suddenly lost their housing. All through the day and night, St. E's was shimmering and swaying with sweet Island melodies and lovely hula hands!

Bon voyage to our pals from that far away land; we hope to see you again soon!



10th Annual Hunger Walk

Once again, the yutes of St. E's will participate in the **September 13**

Hunger Walk to raise funds for the Hawaii Foodbank. St. E's has been greatly blessed BY the Foodbank with a \$2000 grant earlier this year which effectively replaced half of our Food Pantry budget for the year! And, we've been told through the grapevine that another grant is on its way for later this year! Happily, with the near heroic stamina and good humor of **Charlie Kokubun** and his trusty sidekick **Harlan Arakawa**, we have been able to provide hundreds of food bags and hot meals as well as desirable frozen meats and fresh veggies to those in need in our community. Way to go, guys!

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Church Mice.



Attendance

Wednesday, July 2	39
Sunday, July 6	145
Wednesday, July 9	22
Sunday, July 13	184
Wednesday, July 16	13
Sunday, July 20	144
Wednesday, July 23	21
Sunday, July 27	158

Quotable Quote

“The greatest act of faith is to believe God loves you, even in your nakedness, poverty and sinfulness. But human beings always think we have to earn God’s love. We work for it and, by doing good things for God, think we are going to get God’s blessing and love in return. This is Jesus-and-me religion. It ends up being a self-centered morality of self-protection and discipline. It is pure heresy to think you can save your soul. ‘Jesus’ means: ‘Yahweh saves.’ As long as you’re busy saving your soul, you’re preventing God from saving your soul.” -Richard Rohr, *Radical Grace*, 135-6.

Give Aloha



give aloha

Foodland's Annual Community Matching Gifts Program

FOR ALL PLEDGING MEMBERS AND NON-PLEDGERS TOO!!

It's time again for Foodland's annual ONE MONTH MATCHING FUND DRIVE in September. What does this mean, you ask? You can make your PLEDGE payment IN SEPTEMBER to Foodland (have your Ma'ika'i card and tell the cashier **CODE 78661**) and Foodland will match a portion of what you give and send the whole kit and kaboodle to St. E's!! There is a limit of \$249 per family for this campaign.

Hold on to your receipt, drop it in the collection basket with your name on it or give it to Fr. David and we'll be sure to add whatever you gave through Foodland to your quarterly giving report. Let's take advantage of an easy way to increase our pledge income!! Last year St. E's was in the Top 100 of givers!

“Faith is a burning acid. It puts to the test every element of my life and society; it spares nothing. It leads me to question my certitudes, all my moralities, beliefs and policies. It forbids me to attach ultimate significance to any expression of human activity. It detaches and delivers me from money and the family, from my job and my knowledge. It is the surest road to realizing that the only thing I know is that I don't know anything.”