

"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 2017

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Priest Associate

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Transfiguration

The Rev. David J. Gierlach

The Transfiguration of our Lord is, in a manner of speaking, God's "no" to us when we try to whittle Jesus down to size. My brother loves to talk about Jesus as a "wise teacher" or as a "prophet," but, don't give him any of that "Son of God" stuff. I know, as I'm sure you do, plenty of folks who agree with my brother.

The relief we get from whittling Jesus down to size is that we can pick and choose what to follow and what to blow off. Or, perhaps more accurately, we can admire Jesus, without really following him at all.

Into that wishful thinking of ours comes the transfiguration. Six days after Peter identifies Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus takes three of them to the mountain. Just as God came into his rest following six days of creation, so Jesus, after six days, is shown to be, in all his glory, who he really is.

And yet, we modern folk have a hard time with brilliant lights and booming voices from the heavens. What really happened, we'd like to know.

What if Peter had remembered his video camera and filmed the whole thing? What would he have posted to You-Tube that night?

Yet people then were not significantly different from people today.

Something astonishing happened. Something they didn't understand.

Peter began babbling about building little churches, and halfway through his rambling, is cut off by a voice saying to them, saying to us: "Listen to him!"

This event remains so vivid to Peter that years later, he recounts it in his second letter

that we heard today. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record this stunning event.

All of which brings us back to the main question: "Who is this Jesus?" That is the core question.

It is a core question because our answer determines how we live our lives, day in, day out.

Who is this Jesus?

Folks inside and outside the church ask that question all the time. One who asked that question is Flannery O'Connor.

Flannery O'Connor is probably 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 producing dozens of remarkable short stories.

In one of those stories, she tells of a family (mom, dad, grandma, and two kids) who had the misfortune of being in a car accident in a remote area. As it happened, their car crashed just down the hill from where an escaped murderer was hiding out.

The murderer, nicknamed Misfit, started killing off one member of the family after another. The grandma appealed to Misfit to think of Jesus and to stop what he was doing. This is what Misfit had to say:

"Jesus was the only one that ever raised the dead."

"The Misfit continued, 'and he shouldn't have done it. He thrown everything off balance. If he did what he said, then it's nothing for you to do but throw away



Rector's Message, continued

everything and follow him, and if he didn'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.*

Jesus really does create a fork in the road, as even the Misfit knew. Either he is who the voice from the cloud insists he is, or he is a fraud, a charlatan, just another failure in a long line of failed messiahs.

Either way, it matters. It matters a lot.

Who is Jesus for us today? It's the same question Jesus asks his disciples: "Who do you say that I am?"

It is a question we often avoid looking at in the eye; preferring to leave the question hanging; because the answer, no matter the answer, has such profound consequences for how we live our lives.

Today, God insists on an answer to that question: "Who is Jesus?"

The blinding light, the voice thundering from the sky, it is all intent on getting our attention, here, now. It is a wake up call.

Annie Dillard, in her book, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, wonders about the complacency, the lack of attention, the sheer boredom too many folk bring to their faith and to their worship.

She asks:

"Does anyone have the foggiest idea of what sort of power we blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning."

"It is madness to wear ladies straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets! Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews!"

"For the sleeping God may awake someday and take offense; or the waking God may draw us to where we can never return."

Such is the Transfiguration of our Lord.

The transfiguration of our Lord tears the veil separating heaven and earth, and reveals what is too often hidden from view, the glory that God has prepared for each of us!

We should not be lulled into thinking that glory doesn't exist at all.

Instead, perhaps we can remember that while sometimes God meets us on the mountaintop of profound experiences, God most often meets us in the ordinary bend of our daily lives, with a gentle touch, a kind word, a nod of understanding.

After the light, after the booming voice and command that we "listen to him!" perhaps then, alone with

Jesus, we can begin to see that whether in joy or sorrow, God is.

That God seeks us out not in monuments, but through one another. That God is risky and dangerous, especially to our settled ways.

That God will pay any price to have us.

That we cannot escape God -- for God will find us in our homes, and in our work, "when our hearts are broken and when we discover joy. God will find us when we run away from God and when we are sitting in the midst of what seems like hell." *M. Anshute, 1A Feasting on the Word, 456.*

Now the light is gone, and the voice no longer lingers. There they are, alone with Jesus.

He bends over, touching each on their shoulder:

"Get up, don't be afraid"; he says to them, to you, to me.

As we each of us rise, at the gentle urging of Jesus, perhaps it is then that we can say once again,

"You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!"

"Help me to follow you!"

+amen



Heaven's Welcome Wagon



The Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) through the Hawaii Food Bank provides low-income seniors with eligible fresh produce with the goal of improving their health and nutritional status. In fiscal year 2016, the Foodbank and partners provided 3,959 seniors/the disabled with vouchers valued at \$197,950 to purchase fresh produce through the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

There will be one more date at St. Elizabeth, **Tuesday, August 22ND, from 8:00AM - 12:00PM.** Recipients must be 60 years of age



or older AND have a household annual income of less than \$25,290 for single person or \$34,096 for a couple.

On June 27TH, hundreds of senior citizens from around the neighborhood gathered to receive the SFMNP vouchers.

For more information, visit

<http://www.hawaiifoodbank.org/senior-farmers-market>



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with August birthdays!

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Rezna Farek | August 2 |
| Pablo Venenciano | August 4 |
| Sue Yap | |
| Nicholas Chung | August 5 |
| Wayne Pacupac | August 6 |
| Maxwell Starkman | August 9 |
| Sean Padasdao | August 11 |
| David Hirashiki | August 13 |
| Linda Woo | |
| Elyjah Badua | |
| Man Love Sos | August 14 |
| Simter Robert | August 16 |
| Keith Ho | August 17 |
| Harold Ware | |
| Jo Ann Young | |
| Patsy Ann Ching | August 18 |
| Reden Ho | |
| Lowell Douglas Ing | |
| Kaitlin Nagamine | |
| Karen Batangan | August 19 |
| Caren Jean Esaki | August 20 |
| Pedro Timonio | |
| Marietta Ware | |
| Nancy Au | August 21 |
| Joel Jong | |
| Francis Kau | |
| Joshua Lino | August 22 |
| Jaden Morey | |
| Jeferrson Noket | |
| Madleen Michael | August 24 |
| Jarrett Young | August 25 |
| Illuminada Padasdao | |
| Inaria Repaky | |
| Mercy Julio | August 26 |
| Eden Amoy | August 30 |



A Message from the Youth Coordinator

By Melanie Langi

Aloha All,

HELLO AUGUST!

Child: Can Summer break last longer, please?!

August: NOPE! Bye, bye Summer break!

Ready or not, August welcomes the beginning of the new school year. Back to waking up early, dragging yourself out of bed, and getting your okole in gear to get ready for school.

No more late nights, no more sleeping in, no more long lazy hazy summer days. But, however you spent your summer, I hope you made memories, enjoying and living the livelihood of summertime to its fullest!

This year many of our youth took advantage of their break to participate in this year's Hui Pu summer program at Camp Mokuleia and some of our high school youth took part in this year's EYE17 Convention in Oklahoma. For many, it was their first experience and some, it's an event they've already experienced and looked forward towards for years. Either way all the youth enjoyed themselves, enjoyed the program and activities and most of all enjoyed creating new friendships and lasting new memories!

This year over 60+ children from grades Kindergarten to High School received school supplies donated from our members at St. Elizabeth's. Thank you to all of you who donated supplies, all who took the time to sort the supplies individually specifically to each child and to those who helped distribute them. I would like to offer a special thanks and a big mahalo to **Mrs. Sue Yap** for coordinating this and making sure all our children who signed up went home with something. Thank you Mrs. Sue!

With the new school year approaching, I'm getting ready for a new after school program. Volunteers are always welcome! Please see me if your interested in volunteering.

Although Sunday School sessions are on break til September, the youth continue to have bible studies on Friday nights 8pm. Come and join us, share the word and fellowship with other youth. Visitors are always welcome. Hope you can join us, bring a friend!

Summertime should get a speeding ticket.

Blessings,
Melanie Langi

June Attendance

| | |
|------------------------|-----|
| Sunday, July 2, | 189 |
| Sunday, July 9, | 156 |
| Sunday, July 16, | 185 |
| Sunday, July 23, | 184 |
| Sunday, July 30,..... | 149 |



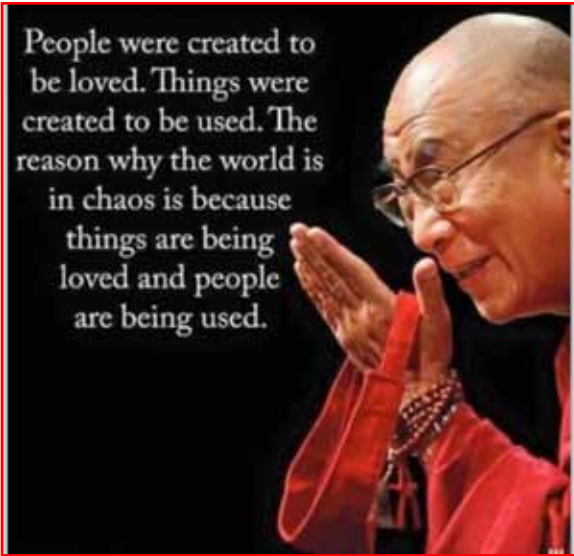



Just before the 5th anniversary of the death of our pal **Kalfred Yee**, the gifted orchid magician, what has bloomed once again but his gorgeous hybrid! Indeed, we live on in the nearer presence of God after death, and that nearer presence reaches all the way down to green pots and rocky soil and the loveliest of blooms. Amen.

"WHEN WE GIVE ALMS, BEFORE THE MONEY TOUCHES THE HAND OF THE POOR, IT TOUCHES THE HAND OF GOD."
A SUFI WISDOM SAYING.



Deacon Steven Costa had the honor of representing the Diocese and Cathedral of St Andrews and St Elizabeth's at the 159th anniversary of the founding of Queen's hospital.



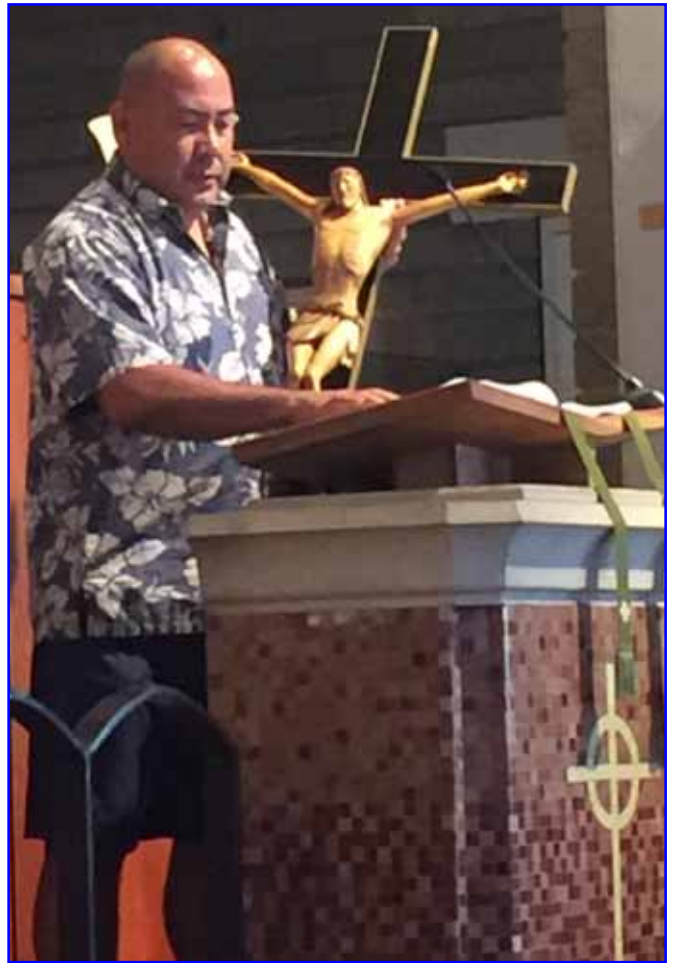


If you are prepared to fight for the right of adoring Jesus in His Blessed Sacrament, then you have got to come out from before your Tabernacle and walk, with Christ mystically present in you, out into the streets of this country and find the same Jesus in the peoples of your cities and villages. You cannot worship Jesus in the Tabernacle if you do not pity Jesus in the slum....And it is folly, it is madness, to suppose that you can worship Jesus in the Sacraments and Jesus on the Throne of Glory, when you are sweating him in the souls of the bodies of His children... Go out and look for Jesus in the ragged, in the naked, and in the oppressed and sweated, in those who have lost hope, in those who are struggling to make good. Look for Jesus. And when you find Him, gird yourselves with his towel and try to wash His feet.

A Beautiful Donation to Remember a Loved One



The family of the late **Mr. Wong Sing Loy** and **Paul and Hazel Wong** donated a beautiful cross to St. Elizabeth's Church on Sunday. At the presentation were the grandchildren of Mr. Wong Sing Loy - **Vevena Won, Annette Chee and Paulette Tom**; and Annette Chee's daughter and son-in-law - **Roanne and Ken Yamasaki**. Thank you for your beautiful gift.



Finale of music program -
drums, tambourines, shakers,
xylophones!

We've got rhythm!



Sunday School News

By Sue Yap

The lazy days of summer went by all too quickly! **Miss Ajaon** had some students beating to a different drum in the summer music program! Thank you to **Miss Ajaon and Naomi** - drums, ucleps, shakers, tambourines and keyboards with Miss Ajaon on the piano!

The Sunday School teachers were busy organizing and getting donations for the children to start the school year off with a back pack filled with 'tools for success'! The signup sheet was filled with 24 names that kept on growing as the distribution date got closer... oh great joy... the list grew to 67! Thank you everyone who so generously donated tools for success, the monetary donations that sent teachers on the hunt for a good bargain, and all of you who helped with the distribution! The Students are ready for school! From the youngest kindergarteners to our seniors in high school ... to the parents and grandparents watching as their child got a bag... they are all thankful!

Melanie Langi also has an after school tutor program at STE in Shim Hall. The extra donations of pencils, pens, paper and glue will be used with her program. Thank you! Her pencils seemed to develop 'feet' last year and she was always short of pencils! Probably why some teachers asked the child to bring in 36 pencils (but only one box of 12 went in their bag)!

Who is more excited to start the Sunday school year.... The students or the teachers?!! And we are short on acolytes... would be nice for our students in middle and high school to rotate a Sunday and help with the Sunday service. Please coordinate the acolyte schedule with **Mark Haworth**!

Not only are we short on acolytes, anyone want to step forward and pick up the beat to help with our Sunday School program, please come visit classroom A on Sunday, August 20th!

Sunday School resumes on August 20th!



Thank you to Great Expressions for the "cinch bags" and backpacks!



Elementary teachers matching names with children. Thanks to Joyce & Leyna, all kids signed out by 10:30!!



High school already? "Thank you tools for success! we're going to study & step up to the next grade!"



Acolytes with their tools for success!



Mel checking the high school list twice!



Grandma's picking up their backpacks with "tools for success" inside!



Want to participate in Hunger Walk?
PRE-REGISTER NOW to increase your chances to win
great participant prizes!

Saturday, September 16, 2017
8:00 am to 11:30 am

Check in begins at 8:00 am, Walk begins at 9:00 am, and
Entertainment Program is 9:30 am to 11:30 am.
Waterfront Plaza

Questions? Please contact **Beverly Santos,**
(808) 954-7874 events@hawaiifoodbank.org

Join us for a fun-filled morning of exercise,
refreshments, keiki activities, and live on-stage
entertainment!

Mahalo to all our volunteers!



Mrs. Terno, Charlie Kokubun, Ann, Shea (ʻIolani Student Volunteer), Rae Costa volunteering for our Five Loaves and Two Fishes breakfast on Saturday mornings.

" LORD, I BELIEVE;
HELP MY UNBELIEF' IS THE
MOST NATURAL AND MOST
HUMAN AND MOST AGONIZING
PRAYER IN THE GOSPEL, AND
I THINK IT IS THE FOUNDATION
PRAYER OF FAITH."

- Flannery O'Connor

Searching?

Alright,
so you don't believe in God,
but do you believe in Something?
Capital S.
Do you believe in goodness, in kindness, in love?
Because if you believe in love, you are one step closer to that capital S,
maybe even a capital G.
For a lot of people
the hard part is believing
without seeing, but you can't see love -- you feel it, and it's the same thing
with God -- you can't see God, but when you're all alone in a dark room and it's
late and you're scared
and you pray to someone
who may not be listening,
but you feel better despite the doubt -- that's God --
or Something, that's feeling, not seeing; it's not about speaking tongues
and crying and screaming "hallelujah" -- it's feeling safe when every bone
in your body is telling you to be afraid, it's making sure love is the only thing in
your heart, because there's no room for hate,
because hate takes up too much space, because the chambers of my heart
are filled with love --
for my family
for the people
for the ocean
for the trees
for the stars
for every beautiful
thing this world holds
and that is infinite.
Life is easier to live
when you focus on love,
when you see the beauty,
the light.
I guess it doesn't really sound like
I'm talking about God right now;
but all that beauty
had to come from somewhere, right?
It is easy to be angry with God. What kind of God allows the horrors of
this world?
What kind of God allows this suffering?
The kind of God who loves us more than anything.
The kind of God who loves us so much She let's us make our own choices.
God's heart breaks just as much as ours; but She knows this isn't the end.
She knows what comes next even though we don't, but we have to trust
that God will invite us into a new life; one filled with light, because trust me,
there were so many moments that the pain,
the grief, felt like too much -- there were so many questions,
so many opportunities to stop, to hate, but I couldn't handle that --
I could not handle the anger because grief in itself is too hard to bear.
Why throw some more darkness into the mix
when I could look up at the sky and hope to God someone was looking
down on me.
I had to look to God,
to Something,
and hope
pray --
that someone was listening,
that sometime, somewhere, I would see him again and that was all that kept
me living.
Do you believe in goodness, in kindness, in love?
Because if you do,
your heart is already open
and that, I think, is all God asks for.

~ T.G.