

*"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 2018**

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## Multiply or Divide?

*The Rev. David J. Gierlach*

Back in my seminary days some 40 years ago (ouch!) our homiletics professor said there is one thing you need to know about preaching: in one hand hold the New York Times and in the other hand hold the Bible.

He explained that preaching with just the New York Times in hand is simply political commentary, while preaching with just the Bible in hand may give some sweet spiritual goose bumps, but those goose bumps don't last and the hunger for something more connected to real life returns.

And he was right.

Seeing current events through the lens of Scripture, and reading Scripture through the lens of current events is as old as the Bible itself.

Imagine the headlines in the Cairo Post when the Hebrew people went on a full scale slave revolt and marched out of Egypt, with Pharaoh's hani brother Moses leading the charge!

Imagine the Jerusalem Gazette when the prophet Amos got all wound up and started writing letters to the editor against the Rodeo Drive fat cats of the day, charging that the high and mighty sugar daddies will soon be thrown out, condemning the society gals "who oppress the poor and crush the needy, who say to their husbands, 'Bring us some drinks!'"

Yes, the front page of the paper always and everywhere intersects with Holy Scripture.

Today's front page is all about division; whether it's the children divided from their parents at the border or the division in our political discourse or the division that rivals like Russia seek to sow not only in the US but between our nation and those of our long standing allies.

In fact, our politics has become so poisonous that while 50 years ago few cared what political party their fiancée belonged to, today it's reported that one's political party affiliation is often a deal breaker for a marriage!

Yes, it seems that division is the coin of the realm, it's the air we breath, the water we swim in.

But the world that God begs us to enter is a world that rejects division.

God's world, a world we are free to enter anytime we wish, it's a world where multiplication is king.

How do we get there?

By changing our standpoint.

Allow me to explain.

Most of us stand in the world of the market economy, an economy that "depends upon anxiety, self-preservation, competition" and a me-first view of the world. Jennings, *The Insurrection of the Crucified*. 92.

It's a world where there is never enough, where striving and ladder climbing are all the rage, even if the ladder is leaning against the wrong wall!

It's our Monday through Saturday world, it's a world that says if I don't look out for me, no one else will, and it turns words like tithing and giving generously into sentimental jokes.

But Jesus stands in what we might call the economy of generosity. Id.

In that economy, manna falls from the sky to feed hungry freed slaves, and five loaves and two fish somehow become enough to feed 5000, with lots left over.

And the question that hangs between these two standpoints is this:

Does giving lead to nothing or does giving lead to everything?

In the market economy, giving is a path to nowhere, to loss, to emptiness.

It's all about division, and everyone knows



that 5 loaves of bread and two fish divided by 5000 people equals exactly NOT ENOUGH.

But the economy of generosity begins with a truth.

The truth that we not only come from God and shall return to God, but that in all of this “in between time,” we belong to God.

That the Source of all life, of all love, holds us close, and never lets us go, who is always here, if not in our room, then just outside our door, where he waits. Eckhart.

And so Jesus has the people sit in groups on the green grass, creating, what in the original Greek is called a symposia.

That’s nice, you may be thinking.

What’s that??

A symposia is a word from the Greek philosopher Plato, and (fun fact!) its the only time this word is used in all of the New Testament.

A symposia is a fellowship of eating and drinking — while discussing the many varieties of love. Jennings, 92.

Today Jesus creates a symposia from a motley crew that could just as well be a gaggle of democrats and republicans, white, black and brown, of today.

We know people of all kinds were attracted to Jesus, from wealthy Nicodemus and the wife of Herod’s butler to school teachers and dentists and the poor and outcast.

And with that mishmash of people (who otherwise wouldn’t be caught dead with each other), Jesus feeds them and then, leads a discussion about the varieties of love: what it’s all about, where it comes from, how can we get some?

And I wonder, can we start having that discussion with one another? Not only in our homes and here in the church, but in the wider community too?

Can we come to the realization that our problem is not solving problems, our problem is that we are disconnected from each other, we are disconnected from God.

How might we reconnect?

Perhaps first by remembering exactly who we are.

That we are physical beings — with souls.

It was the poet who reminds us, “By remembering that our soul is not heart, liver or spleen, but that which gives life to them.

That our soul is not memory or desire, but it uses these things as its hands and feet.

That our soul is not the intellect or the will, it is their master, it is the background of our being, an immensity that can never be possessed.

And because we are physical beings — with souls — from within every human being a light shines into the world, reminding us that of ourselves we are nothing, but the light is all, and when we allow that light to shine through us, we become all with the all.

intellect, it creates genius.

When the soul flows through the will, it creates the virtuous person.

When the soul flows through affection, it gives birth to love.” RW Emerson, *The Oversoul*, paraphrased.

To put it less poetically, perhaps we can reconnect with God when we get out of our own way.

When we give up the levers of needing to control people, places and things.

And perhaps most importantly when we move from living in our yesterdays and in our tomorrows (places far too many people spend their whole lives!) and instead make the courageous leap to live solely and exclusively and permanently in the NOW, which is, after all, the only real life that exists.

That kind of life, living only in the NOW, may feel like walking on water, because the lure of past memories and anxieties over what comes next can feel overwhelming.

But if we begin to trust Jesus’ economy of generosity, we ever so slowly begin to experience that giving doesn’t lead to having nothing, but we learn the truth — that giving leads to having everything!

It’s a message our nation needs to learn once again, as we are living in times that seek to retreat and hide and conserve. If a fruit tree fails to give fruit, it is eventually cut down.

It’s no different for people or nations.

Unless we give we shall die - only generosity leads to life. But how can we know that as we navigate these rough waters? Why, here comes Jesus, striding on the waves, telling us in no uncertain terms,

Relax!

“I am.

Don’t be afraid!”

How can we practice this?

Close your eyes for a moment and listen...

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know that I am.

Be still and know.

Be still.

Be.\*

+amen

\*R.Rohr, *Everything Belongs*, 62



The Saturday morning breakfast continues to grow, attracting volunteers and guests who are now mingling amongst one another so it's hard to tell who's who...a very good thing! What with ukuleles strumming and Hawaiian music being sung, if you didn't know better, ya mighta thank you stumbled into the Kingdom of God... which, when you think about it....maybe ya did!!!!



Congratulations to Jenisse and Jordan Higa-Paulo, the new daughter-in-law and long time son of Mel and Mosese Langi!!!! The newlyweds were married here in the church on Saturday July 28 and we wish them a long and happy married life!!!!



## Happy Birthday

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

Renza Farek	08/02
Pablo Venenciano	08/04
Sue Yap	
Nicholas Chung	08/05
Wayne Pacupac	08/06
Maxwell Starkman	08/09
Sean Padasdao	08/11
David Hirashiki	08/13
Linda Woo	
Elyjah Badua	
Man Love Sos	08/14
Simter Robert	08/16
Keith Ho	08/17
Harold Ware	
Jo Ann Young	
Patsy Ann Ching	08/18
Reden Ho	
Doug Ing	
Kaitlin Nagamine	
Karen Batangan	08/19
Caren Jean Esaki	08/20
Pedro Timonio	
Marietta Ware	
Nancy Au	08/21
Joel Jong	
Francis Kau	
Joshua Lino	08/22
Jaden Morey	
Jeferrson Noket	
Madleen Michael	08/24
Jarrett Young	08/25
Illuminada Padasdao	
Inaria Repaky	
Mercy Julio	08/26
Eden Amoy	08/30



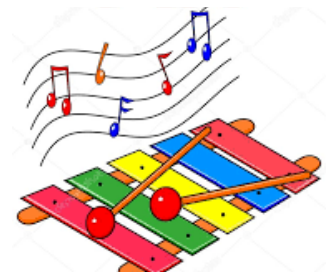
# Summer Music Program!



Many thanks to **Miss Ajaon** for sharing every week her truly amazing musical skills with our youngsters!!! Pretty soon we shall expect something along the lines of the Sgt. Pepper Lonely Hearts Band to be rocking the church halls with gusto and verve!!!!

“THE TRAGEDY OF CHRISTIANITY IS THAT IT CAME TO SEE ITSELF AS REPLACING OTHER RELIGIONS INSTEAD OF ADDING SOMETHING TO ALL OF THEM...”

~ SIMONE WEIL



# Sunday School News

By Sue Yap

The Music Program with Miss Ajaon is not skipping a beat and we have some great kids with lots of rhythm!!! They are learning notes, beats, and playing the drums, ucleps, tamborines and xylophones! The Music Program will be sharing their rhythm with you in September!!! The music program will be ending on August 5th.

**Sunday School will start on August 26th!** We will have 2 classes, primary and preschool in classroom B and elementary and middle school in classroom A. There will be no classes for the high school students. Some of the high school students have been most helpful as 'helpers' with the primary and pre-school class and Miss Jamie. We hope that the high school students will also participate in the sunday service as acolytes!

**THANK YOU!** to all your generous donations for getting our kids off to a great school year! Without your generous donations we could not help as many of our children as we have... we did **over 60 bags**, with backpacks going to our most of our primary, elementary, middle school and acolytes! Pencils, tables, composition books, folders, markers, scissors, glue, glue sticks... all checked off their lists! School supplies have been distributed, along with their school supply list and school instructions! Check with the sunday school teachers if you need a school supply list. Thanks to the parents/ grandparents and kids who signed up and picked up their supplies! Please pick up your supplies if you haven't already! If we 'missed you', please see a teacher or Fr. David!!!

See you all on August 26th!!! Hope you're all having a safe and happy summer!!!



## July Attendance

Sunday, July 1,	218
Sunday, July 8,	179
Wednesday, July 11,	10
Sunday, July 15,	171
Wednesday, July 18,	15
Sunday, July 22,	187
Wednesday, July 25,	17
Sunday, July 29,	251



# A Message from the Youth Coordinator

By Melanie Langi

Hello All!

Welcome to August. I pray you all are doing well on this beautiful mid-summer day! Yes, it's still summer. But can you believe we are only four months away from the end of the year? Geez! Slow down Father Time.



It has been a fun-filled eventful summer for most of our youth. With Summer Camp, Late Night Basketball, and more than a handful of car washes. Some of the youth attended summer school and some went to summer fun to have...some fun! However they spent their summer I hope they all had fun!

It's Back to School time again! Yay! Thank you to Ms. Sue and her gang of school supply helpers with providing and equipping our kids with school supplies! You guys are awesome! So kids be cool at school. Learn. Laugh. Have fun!

As summer break comes to an end and a new school year begins, I am preparing for our After-School Program to begin shortly when the school year starts.

I am looking for volunteers to assist with the program.(retired teachers, college students, high school seniors or any one interested in helping our youth grow and learn) There will be a study hall for all students including homework assistance, computer lab and a reading program. Let me know if you or anyone you know would like to volunteer time to help with the program.

We've continued to have youth bible study throughout the summer, we will continue to have bible study every Friday nights at 7pm. All are welcome, everyone is invited. So come, fellowship with us, receive a refreshing word and refreshments. See you Friday!



Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:16

Yours truly,  
Melanie Langi



“WHEN SOMEONE SHOWS YOU WHO THEY ARE, BELIEVE THEM. “  
~ MAYA ANGELOU



Thank you to everyone in the Diocese of Hawai'i for allowing me the honor and privilege of representing the Diocese at this year's **General Convention in Austin, TX**. As a first-time attendee of the event, there was a lot to take in. There were Episcopalians and Anglicans from all over. Southern Hospitality and the Love of God were evident everywhere. The number of people there was astounding, but to think that I could walk into any of their churches, even not knowing the language, and follow along in the worship was comforting and unifying.

Speaking of worship, I was given the privilege to serve as the deacon at the table which was the main worship service for the Friday Eucharist. I was also asked to **proclaim the gospel in Hawaiian**. Mahalo to braddah **Roth**, who helped me, with my enunciation and cadence.

As an alternate, I was able to observe the House of Deputies, the House of Bishops and attend the committee meetings that spoke to my heart, social justice. I sat in on some moving meetings about reconciliation. After hearing people talk about how their culture was being lost/stolen/overrun, I felt compelled to add the story of the Hawaiians, after which some folks came up to me and said they didn't know. It felt wonderful to be in a safe environment where our stories could be told and heard!

To help in the work of **Recovery Ministries**, I attended a Recovery Ministry AA meeting and a local AA meeting, at the First United Methodist Church. The theme of different but same kept repeating itself. Worship, homeless shelter, AA – they were in a different city, but so similar, to what we do here in Hawai'i.

Our visit to the **T. Don Hutto Residential Detention Center** was very moving and very hot. It made subsequent discussions, about our nation coming from a place of fear and not from a place of faith in Christ Jesus much more meaningful. As we traveled to the Federal Detention Center, we passed a large homeless shelter.

Next morning, I took a walk in that direction, and was led, compelled to visit and offer my services there. I prayed with a few of the mentally ill “guests”, was given a tour of the facility, and was told that **St David's** next door, would be serving breakfast, soon. I was directed over to **St David's Trinity Outreach Center**, where a line of hungry people stretched around the block. I walked in and introduced myself. I told them, I was a cleric visiting from Hawaii, at the National Convention, and wanted to see what I could do to help. We promptly set up to feed the 5000, with five loaves and two fish. We blessed, we broke, and we shared. And all who were fed were satisfied.

Inspired by the **Jesus Movement** and its message of Love, twice, after members of our delegation went out to eat dinner, we collected the leftovers and fed the hungry on the streets of Austin. I also experienced a Good Samaritan moment when I saw two homeless men on the sidewalk. Knowing that these are the children of God we are called to love, I stopped to talk with them. **John and James** (yes, those were their names) thanked me for stopping and giving them a few dollars and a moment of my time. They said many other clergy crossed the street to avoid them. Different time, different city, same story...

As Jesus said, you will always have the poor with you. This has re-energized me, to continue the work our Lord has called us to do: **feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, invite in the stranger, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the prisoner.**

Mahalo again for allowing me to experience this once every three-year event in the life of our Church!

~ Diocesan Arch Deacon Steven Costa

## Glimpses of the Kingdom

Or as modern parlance has it, Kin-dom. And that is really what it is all about, to practice radical kinship. So says Fr. Greg Boyle, Jesuit priest who founded and directs the Los Angeles Homeboy Industries, the largest gang intervention, rehabilitation and re-entry program in the world. Radical Kinship is about being anchored in love and friendship without concern for results, outcomes, or judgements. It's a matter of hanging out together and allowing the Spirit to do its work. It's about trusting in the power of God's love, that indeed Love is the only answer, as Catholic Worker co-founder Dorothy Day said.



Every day we get to practice radical kinship with our houseless community when they come to our door seeking food, hygiene products, phone charging, clean clothes, yes, but in the end it seems what our friends want most is someone to talk to, not for advice, but someone to listen with respect.



This past month of July we have had two awesome glimpses of the kin-dom. The first was on July 8 when Fr. David gathered all sorts of folk to bless and celebrate the new ministry of Wallyhouse. That gathering was a kin-dom glimpse with all types of people, rich and poor, young and old, light and dark, everyone mixed and having fun together. There were no boundaries, just a bunch of folk having a good time together while eating and enjoying the music of Stephen Inglis.

The second awesome glimpse came with the opening on Tuesday, July 24. of Artfelt, the open art studio.

No one came but we did not allow discouragement. We are excited to welcome the marginalized into a beautiful, cool space to play art. On Thursday, Fr. David cajoled the Micronesian boys to check it out. They took off feigning indifference until curiosity got the best of them. First, 2 boys came in and drew for about 5 minutes and left. Then 1 boy came in to draw, for about 5 minutes. After a gap of about 10 minutes of the studio empty, the boys came in 2, then 5, then 9, 11! They drew, they were focused and didn't want to leave.

"You don't know these kids," we were warned. What we know is that they were warm and respectful. One said, "thank you for inviting us into this space. If we were out there, we would do something stupid, we would make trouble. You are giving us a place to be good instead. Thank you." That is the beginning of radical kinship.



**COME and VOLUNTEER!!**

**COME help** to make food bags, and or serve them

to fold laundry

to bake something in our kitchen and serve our houseless community a delicious treat fresh out of the oven!

to join in Artfelt by assisting or teaching a workshop!

to help beautify the gardens

to help us in the way the Spirit beckons you;

Come and practice radical kinship with us!

