

"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

December 2015 Endings and

Beginnings

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Welcome to the First Sunday of Advent, the beginning of a new church year when we shall pick up with St Luke as he shares with us the story he has come to know in Jesus.

Now a new church year is nothing like a new calendar year.

A new church year brings us that much closer to God's ultimate kingdom, that much more is asked of us in living out our faith, in taking on the foolish message that love is stronger than hate, that forgiveness destroys revenge, that peace between enemies is not only possible, it is inevitable.

And we mark this deepening journey with colors that are different: purple for royalty, purple for bruises.

Given the events of recent days, the purple, especially for bruises, is especially appropriate.

Not long ago, hundreds were injured and killed in Paris through savage attacks, and just the other day, things got especially scary when a Turkish missile killed three Russian airmen over Syria.

Not to be lost in all of this bloodshed was the attack by our own military on a hospital run by Doctors Without Borders in Afghanistan that killed over 30 patients and staff.

And while politicians are whipping up fear and xenophobia about refugees badly needing a safe place to call home, the fact remains that over 30,000 people are killed each year in America by the guns we so steadfastly refuse to regulate or control.

We don't have to go much farther than the front page or the evening news to see that violence seems to rule the day.

The often heard quote from Paris this week, echoed in all of those places where violence runs amok, is how difficult it is to prepare for Christmas in the face of such horrors.



Even those untouched by violence often share that sentiment simply because the news of it is never ending.

So you might expect this first Sunday in Advent, as we get to our gospel lesson, that at least today we'd hear a word of comfort, a sort of collective "there, there" from God to us.

Of course, as you know, we've got no such reading today.

Instead we are warned of fear and foreboding, of distress and the shaking of the heavens themselves.

It's all about endings, and not a word about cute babies or delighted parents or even a comforting "there there" from the almighty.

Truth be told, Christmas really isn't about cute babies and delighted parents after all.

Christmas is all about endings, and that's what Advent is trying to prepare us for.

But what kind of endings?

It's this....

Christmas is all about ending our way of doing things.

Just last week one of our members sent me an email inviting me to debate over how we see our world and the solutions to it.

This friend of mine comes from a position of common sense and good business judgment, all with the underlying philosophy that God helps those who help themselves.

And frankly, that is our way of doing things.

Rector's Message, continued

And why not?

How well have the powers of love and forgiveness and gentleness worked in our world?

Many can and do argue that these are fine feelings, but they just don't cut the mustard when face to face with life as it is.

That's exactly what's happening in Jeremiah this morning.

The people have been crushed, all hope is lost, and the power of God to make things better in the real world seems like a hopeless pipe dream.

But the prophet sees a shoot, a green leaf, sprouting from what for all the world looks like a dead as doornails tree trunk.

Just so is Christmas that shoot, that green leaf, budding on the dead wood of our way of doing things.

Christmas ends our way of doing things.

It ends tit for tat and getting what you deserve.

It ends "looking out for number one" and it ends karma too!

Christmas is God's doorway into an entirely new way to live life.

It is the doorway into the hard, but life-giving path, of acceptance and forgiveness, and gentleness, and peace.

This is not some kind of naïve sentimentality.

The cross stands just as firmly in the manger crib as it does at Golgotha, because to live this new way often leads to undeserved suffering, unwarranted injury, even to unjust death.....the cross, you see, ensures that the full measure of this life is paid in full.

This new life that Christmas brings actually means being willing to die rather than to kill, to let go of loved ones rather than killing enemies, to trust that death is not the worst thing, because in Christ, death is no longer permanent, it is merely an interruption.

There are endings of all sorts.

There is the cosmic ending that so many look to the sky waiting for: the actual and literal end of all that is.

There are endings of a political nature with regimes coming and going, the nations fighting one another to the gory end.

There are also personal endings: whether it is a marriage that can no longer survive, or children who have grown and moved to distant places, or simply a body that no longer functions in a way that once seemed so natural.

What Advent invites us to see is that when we face any of these endings, we need not be afraid, but rather, that we look to Jesus and ask for the grace to follow his Way.

If it's the cosmic end that were worried about, he reminds us to hold our heads up high and wait with confidence.

If it's war or national security or ISIS that's got us so flustered that we start making enemies out of orphan refugees, he reminds us of the power, and the foolishness, of the way of the cross.

That terror cannot be defeated by more terror nor can death be defeated by more death.

No, it is willingness to take up our cross, as individuals, as communities, and yes, as a nation, to say to those who would harm us: "we forgive you."

"We will not retaliate."

"We will suffer death rather than inflict it."

This is what it means to be Christian in today's world.

Perhaps our friends in Paris, who feel so empty as they decorate Christmas trees in the aftermath of such horror can remember this.

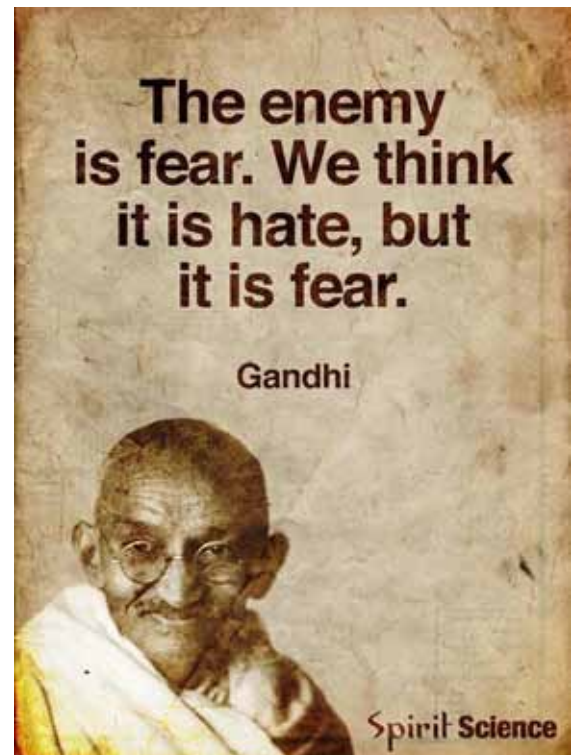
Christmas is not about cute babies and delighted parents.

Christmas is about ending our way of running the planet.

Christmas is about the beginning of God's way of running things.

And perhaps that beginning is our hope.

+amen





Holy Camoley! Look at all these teens at prayer right here in lovely downtown Palama! IMUA gang!!

December Youth Report

This year's Halloween Party was a SUCCESS as we had a much greater turnout than last year. Our vision of having a safe haven for the community to go trick-o-treating had children from all corners of Palama flooding in came true. Special Thanks to **Preston** and **MaryAnn Lentz** and the Tongan congregation for coming out to support with the older youth, helping by decorating their own cars and giving out candy to the younger children. On top of that, they also prepared entertainment with action songs accompanied by the Pacific Islander youth of St. John's all the way from Waianae. At the end of the night, we all feasted on 15 boxes of pizza and cupcakes made by **Mrs. Nella Kleinschmidt** and believe me, there weren't any left overs.

Our youth joined hand with young adults, showing off their candle of light and passed it out the community to remind them that the real Halloween is Jesus the Light of your Life. They proudly invited their own families and friends over to see their effort of success.

I don't know where in Hawaii, only at St. Elizabeth's, you will find Middle and High School students attending Sunday School. Normally the highest level is Elementary, but we find it meaningful to teach the bible lesson every Sunday, sharing different views and application from our own life experiences.

The youth have been really active this semester attending a youth program called **Ku A'e Hou** (New Rising Wings). This program's mission is to empower, encourage, and building faith, love and hope, establishing purpose for Hawaii's youth and families. Our youth have been involved and participated with this program for the past three months, and every Monday they go to Waimanalo Park from 6pm to 8:30pm, pictured above. Each week, we participate in different

games and activities followed by a brief group discussion on a theme. Last quarter, the theme was "Re-Focus," getting back on track to school mode from summer break. "Let It Go" was the theme for this quarter, which finished this past Monday, as we transition into the Christmas and Holiday season.

Our youth and young adults are looking forward to another year of the Community Christmas Party on Dec 23. We collected shoeboxes ready to decorate for Santa's gift. Our youth will serve the neighboring children by preparing gifts, entertainment and games for the day.

We will work hard and give ourselves a treat after at the Winter Camp at Mokule'ia host by Diocese Pacific Islander Ministry. Some of us will attend and be involve in the Pacific Islander Prayer Breakfast at Pomaika'i Ballroom with singing, dancing and with intercession prayers.

Taking our youth in our St. Elizabeth's van is a Ministry on Wheels. We carried our name with us wherever we go. The Pride of St. E's.

-Viliani Lino

St. E's Youth Coordinator 2015

GIVE THANKS

FAMILY • FRIENDS • GRATITUDE



Big Bill wrapping up a deeeelicious apple banana crepe (or is it pumpkin pie????)



Unde Mo dug an imu and made kalua of about 2 million turkeys.....!



Eric and Megumi normally man the shave ice, but here expand their skills and talents!



The kitchen crew is always always always hard at work!



This past Thanksgiving saw a kazillion St E volunteers turn out to make and deliver 200 hot meals to our neighbors on the streets; folks who feel unable to travel to the meal centers for fear of having what little they own stolen. So many thanks to the **Langi** family for heading this up and for everyone who pitched in!!



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Smoothies anyone????!!!

Thanksgiving Thanks!

Thank you all for your support, prayers and donations of non-perishable foods. The children handed out 26 empty bags to 26 families in church and asked that the families bring back the bags with something to share in the church on Thanksgiving Day. 15 bags were brought back and on Thanksgiving Day the non-perishable foods were placed around the church along with the generous donations and overflowing abundance of fruits and vegetables at the altar! Sharing is caring, all who came to worship on Thanksgiving Day not only counted their blessings, they shared the food from the generous donations of everyone with everyone.



Mel and Marj taking a well deserved breather!



The beautiful altar decorations of fresh fruit and veggies all lovingly arranged by **Sue Jean Chun** and daughter **Collette Arakawa**! Wonderful job ladies....thanks so much!!



Some coins, some soap, a few words about us and folks are really happy!

Laundry Aloha



To the left is our Laundry Aloha packet. It holds a \$10 roll of quarters and two large capacity detergent pods. We give away 40 of these packets each month to folks living on the streets. **It is a more popular program than our Food Pantry and we really need funds to keep this effort going.** If you can help with a tax deductible donation you will help folks who otherwise don't have a way to clean their clothes feel somewhat more human while living in inhuman conditions, and to pass on just a bit of aloha through the gift of clean laundry. Mahalo! --Fr. David

Rest in Peace



Iris Shigenaga Park
Born January 28th, 1938
Died October 22nd, 2015



Raymond Koon Chew Leong
Born August 8th, 1919
Died October 18th, 2015



Mildred Dolfo Dantsuka
Born October 22nd, 1933
Died October 11nd, 2015

*In just 11 days in October, three of our saints passed into life everlasting.
Our deep condolences to each family and our prayers that these saints may move
from glory to glory in the nearer presence of God.*

"When I give food to the
poor, they call me a

Saint.

When I ask why the poor
have no food, they call me a

COMMUNIST."

-Dom Helder Camara

Raising Lazarus from the dead was the death sentence for Jesus. Only the fear of death keeps people in line, subject to the powers and principalities of this world. By defeating death, Jesus gave notice to the powers that their days were at an end. They took his life, but God raised him up, defeating death forever; defeating it even for you, for me.





Sunday School News

First Sunday in Advent, Acolyte **Nathan** lit the first candle on the advent wreath as the children gathered around the wreath and Pious read the opening prayer. Each Sunday in Advent, the Children will participate in the processional until all four candles are lit and the white Christ candle, will be lit on Christmas Day.

On the 3rd Sunday in Advent, December 13, the children will launch their Arks. They have been studying about Noah and his Ark...the animals, the floods, the rain, God's covenant... the Rainbow! The animals, two by two, will be collecting loose change, YOUR loose change, to generously help the wonderful people in Icodei to be self-sufficient and help them buy seeds, chickens, goats, cows ... loose change can make big changes in the daily lives of the children and people in Icodei. Bring your loose change to church!!!

On Christmas Day, the Ark will reach land! The Creche will be blessed, the children and 'song birds' will lift their voices in thanksgiving to all and sing out, Joy To The World - with Miss **Ajaon** on piano and Uncle **Ned Murphy** on banjo!

Blessed Advent and a truly Blessed Christmas to all!

CHRISTMAS AT ST. ELIZABETH'S
 Christmas Eve, December 24 • 9:00PM
 Christmas Day, December 25 • 9:00AM

Neighborhood Children's
 Christmas Party
 Wednesday, Dec. 23, 10AM to 2PM

Please mark your calendars for this annual St. Elizabeth's tradition. Elves of all ages are welcome!



The Sunday School children gather round the advent wreath.



The culinary delights! Not too thick, not too thin, and NO raisins!



The Betty Crocker Baking club baking communion bread

Life After BIRTH

Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with December birthdays!

In a mother's womb were two babies. One asked the other:

"Do you believe in life after delivery?" The other replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."



"Nonsense" said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What kind of life would that be?"

The second said, "I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths. Maybe we will have other senses that we can't understand now."

The first replied, "That is absurd. Walking is impossible. And eating with our mouths? Ridiculous! The umbilical cord supplies nutrition and everything we need. But the umbilical cord is so short. Life after delivery is to be logically excluded."

The second insisted, "Well I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here. Maybe we won't need this physical cord anymore."

The first replied, "Nonsense. And moreover if there is life, then why has no one has ever come back from there? Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery there is nothing but darkness and silence and oblivion. It takes us nowhere."

"Well, I don't know," said the second, "but certainly we will meet Mother and she will take care of us."

The first replied "Mother? You actually believe in Mother? That's laughable. If Mother exists then where is She now?"

The second said, "She is all around us. We are surrounded by her. We are of Her. It is in Her that we live. Without Her this world would not and could not exist."

Said the first: "Well I don't see Her, so it is only logical that She doesn't exist."

To which the second replied, "Sometimes, when you're in silence and you focus and you really listen, you can perceive Her presence, and you can hear Her loving voice, calling down from above."

- Útmutató a Léleknek
#Mother Mother Earth News

Jeffrey Starkman	12/01
Gillian Batanga, Cheryl Mitsuka, Alan Scroggie	12/02
Fr. Peter Fan	12/03
Charles Steffey, Nip Repaky, Shellie Anne Steffey	12/04
Dexin Lu	12/06
Kais Eis	12/08
Christopher Lau	12/10
Lynn Pascua	12/11
Glory Ann Tokoma'ata	12/17
Jonathan Lau	12/18
Carla Pacupac	12/19
Carol Abe, Jacque Gierlach, Kaylen Hayashi	12/20
Christine Tokoma'ata	12/21
Susan Won	12/22
Gelacio Timonio, Delphine Shea, Catherine Chan, Elizabeth Chan	12/23
Laureen Zane	12/28
Rally Muludy	12/29
Aaron Arakawa, Iechy Mako	12/30
Mildred Goo, Otega White,	12/31



Attendance

Sunday, Nov 1, Eucharist & Vespers	235
Wednesday, Nov 4, Eucharists	23
Sunday, Nov 8, Eucharists & Vespers	244
Wednesday, Nov 11, Eucharist	19
Sunday, Nov 15, Eucharists & Vespers	235
Wednesday, Nov 18, Eucharist	20
Sunday, Nov 22, Eucharists & Vespers	205
Wednesday, Nov 25, Eucharist	16
Thursday, Nov 26, Thanksgiving	95
Sunday, Nov 29, Eucharist & Vespers	212