

"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

February 2015 **Healings and Cures**

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The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector

When I was in Africa, the bishop I stayed with, Bishop Reuben, told us the story of his then 11 year old son who had a bone marrow disease that left him unable to produce red blood cells.

After over 40 blood transfusions, the doctors told the family the boy needed a bone marrow transplant or he would die soon.

Except, the transplant cost \$100,000 and the family made maybe \$100 per month.

The boy, on the return trip from the capital city of Nairobi to their small town on the other side of the country, reminded his dad, then an Anglican priest, of Jesus throwing out the demon from the epileptic boy.

"Dad, when Jesus cured the boy, he told the spirit to never come back.

When you pray for me, you pray for a cure but you don't order the disease to never return."

When they arrived home, Reuben told his elderly parents the grim news that their grandson would likely die within the month.

That night, thinking more of the boy's comment about prayer, Reuben and his brother Robert stood at either end of the boy's bed, and prayed their hearts out that the illness killing the boy leave him and never return.

The boy went to sleep as did the rest of the family.

The next morning the grandfather opened the chicken coop to let the chickens out.

The young boys, like Reuben's son, were charged with keeping hawks at bay since the hawks often waited for the chicks to emerge -- breakfast for the hawks!

Reuben's boy was too weak for months to take up this task, but something changed that morning.

The boy came running out into the yard, picked up stones, and kept the hawks away.

He then went back to lay down.

A few days later, taking the boy to the local doctor to test his red cell count, the doctor asked if the boy just received a transfusion.

"No, he had not," came the reply.

"Why do you ask?"

"Because his red cell count is nearly normal."

A few more days pass, another test, and his count is normal.

This happened over 20 years ago, and the boy, now a man, is a university graduate.

Healing became a cure.

She was only 38 when the diagnosis of terminal illness came.

For a few months, there was rage and despair at the unfairness of it all.



Rector's Message, continued

Four young children still needing to be raised.

A husband to love.

A new career just beginning in a field she adored.

How could God do this to her?

To them?

But as the months passed, and the diagnosis did not change, she began to change how she saw the diagnosis.

It slowly became an entry way into the suffering of so many others — when it used to be so easy to say “I know how you feel,” now she really did know.

And it became an entry way into God; a faith that had been strong before, now took on deep mystery, profound insight, and a glow that is usually reserved for pregnant women.

In a sense, she was pregnant, not with a child, but with an expectation that she was moving, sooner than she wished, but moving nevertheless, into the far country where

God may be known face to face.

When she died that February morning, with a loud groan and a great exhaling of air, it was as if her spirit filled the whole house, before moving upward and outward into the great mystery that awaits us all.

There was no cure, but there was profound healing.

Fred was his name.

He too received a terminal diagnosis.

And after a brief period of distress, he says, “something amazing happened.

I simply stopped doing everything that wasn't essential, that didn't matter.”

His terminally ill life became vital and peaceful.

But the doctors changed their mind.

What he had was rare, but not terminal.

It could be cured.

Fred says: “When I heard this over the telephone, I cried like a baby — because I was afraid my life would go back to the way it used to be!” P. Senge, *Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future*, 25-6.

There was a cure, but would there be healing?

We live in a country and in a culture obsessed with cures, but our faith gently reminds us that really it is the healing that matters most of all — and healing can always happen, even without, and sometimes even despite, a cure.

This truth is hammered home in Mark's gospel today.

Mark continues his rapid-fire reflections on the ministry of Jesus; and what you can't miss is that where Jesus is; there is life, not death, there is healing, not sickness, there is presence, not absence.

From Peter's mother-in-law who, upon her recovery becomes the very first deacon, serving those in need; to the whole town of Capernaum, where the sick are healed, disease is routed, and devils are put to flight.

This is what the Kingdom of God looks like, this is God's activity in the world.

And yet, there is Bernice's death; Christine's cancer; Sendichy's faltering kidney.

There are the starving poor in Somalia, the malnourished children in our own Appalachia, in our own Palama.

And it is here, where the finger of God touches the tragedies of this fallen world, that the call to seek healing, and not necessarily a cure, invites us into deep contemplation.

In the midst of all his healing, Jesus leaves town long before sunrise, heading off to the desert, off to the deserted places, to pray.

Jesus goes to the desert because it is in the desert, in places of desolation, that we can get closest to God.

I don't know why that is really, but it seems that desolation, which can come in the form of a lonely place or a cancer

Rector's Message

diagnosis, opens windows that are not otherwise readily opened, windows that allow us to peer into the profound mystery that is our life.

As John Updike once said: "Some secrets are hidden from health."

Jesus heals those in desolate circumstances; then heads for the desolate places to encounter the Father.

And I wonder if what we are to take from the desolation that will invariably arise in your life, in mine, is not that it is caused by God; but that when it comes, God is waiting, as always, only now, perhaps we can see, perhaps we can hear, the still, small voice that longs to assure us that we are each of us beloved children of the God who gathers the outcasts, who heals the brokenhearted, who binds up our wounds.

And who better to do so than the very one who was wounded by us, and for us, so that we might hope in his steadfast love.

In the end, it is the cross, that horrific reality of human sadism; that eternal symbol of the desolation God endures in order to bring us home.

It is the cross that makes it safe to venture out onto the tightrope of faith, seeking the miracle of healing, even if a cure is not in the cards, because Jesus has shown us that death is not the worst thing.

Death is even now defeated.

And the God who is faithful to us in life is faithful to us even in death.

This is the message of Jesus Christ: proclaimed in Galilee, proclaimed to the ends of the earth!

Tell it again when you leave this place today!

+amen



"Every now and then I think about my own death, and I think about my own funeral. Every now and then I ask myself, 'What is it that I want said?' I'd like someone to mention that day, that Martin Luther King, Jr. tried to give his life serving others. I'd like for somebody to say that day that Martin Luther King Jr. tried to love somebody. I want you to say that day that I tried to be right and to walk with them. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try to feed the hungry. I want you to be able to say that day that I did try in my life to clothe the naked. I want you to say on that day that I did try in my life to visit those who were in prison. And I want you to say that I tried to love and serve humanity."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Annual Meeting

Guinness Book of World Records confirms that we had the *fastest* Annual Meeting in the history of Christendom. And, we are pleased to report that **Kelvin Padasdao, Christine Tokoma'ata and Iustina Weia** were elected to serve three year terms on the vestry; **Doug Ing, Dawn Yadao, Melanie Langi, Mary Ann Lentz and Caren Chun-Esaki**, were elected to the Annual Convention as our delegates, with **Susie Murphy** and **Collette Arakawa** as alternates; **Gretchen Jong, Akiu Chock, Faith Chock and Jamie Chock** were elected ECW delegates, **Dave Kleinschmidt** was resoundingly re-elected as the Jr. Warden and **Caren Esaki** graciously agreed to serve another year as Senior Warden!

We gave our thanks and a lei to departing vestry members **Fane Lino, Fran Kramer** and of course our buddy **Roy Chee**. Many thanks for your years of service!

Make Way for New Flooring



These guys spend more time on their knees than a priest!



Marsono Remigio hard at work in the chapel restoration.



Charles Steffy and William Bossy reshoe the pews.

“The power of a fully lived life or a truly learned mind is not a power to be sought or contrived. It comes only as we let go of what we possess and find ourselves possessed by a truth greater than our own.”

-Parker Palmer

A HUGE crowd for Obamacare signups



Attendance

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------|-----|
| Jan. 4 | Sun. Eucharist & Vespers | 240 |
| Jan. 7 | Wednesday Healing Service | 50 |
| Jan. 11 | Sun. Eucharist & Vespers | 207 |
| Jan. 14 | Wednesday Healing Service | 21 |
| Jan. 18 | Sun. Eucharist & Vespers | 221 |
| Jan. 25 | Sun. Eucharist & Vespers | 215 |



Jojo signing people up for Obamacare.



It seems that most of our friends from Micronesia will not lose their medical benefits come February 15 after all. These folks are being signed up for The Affordable Care Act, *aka* Obamacare, and even those who don't sign up by the deadline will be automatically enrolled in a Silver Plan. Now we just need to convince the State to supplement things like deductibles and premiums for the poorest folks.....but at least our pals on dialysis won't be barred from this life saving treatment. “Community leader **Jojo Peter** has been hard at it signing folks up for the ACA right here at Shim Hall!”

Sunday School News

The children studied the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, were very wide-eyed to witness the baptism of a precious little baby girl three weeks later and compared baptism long ago to baptism in the church. Many of the children have been baptized, some don't remember, one remembers being baptized at the age of 10 in the country from which he came. We are now studying Jesus and his disciples, his teachings and how we can follow his footsteps.

The Sunday School sang *Kum Ba Yah* during the offertory. There were 5 students who joined us for the first time! It's always fun to meet new friends. We are looking for students interested in serving as an acolyte or crucifer, and students to enroll in Fr. David's 1st communion class during Lent.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Remember to join us on Tuesday, February 17th, 6:00 pm for the Annual Pancake Supper! All are invited to join the fun, fellowship and food! A short evening prayer in the church will precede the Pancake Supper in Shim Hall.

Acolyte and Crucifer Training

Saturday, February 21st, 9:00 am Acolyte and Crucifer Class will be led by **Preston Lentz**. This class is for current and interested children and adults to serve as Acolytes and Crucifers! Please mark the date, if you're interested, please join the dedicated students and youth serving as acolytes and crucifers.



Blessing the floors and all the feet walking on them!



Born to Eternal Life

The life of **Bernice Kau** (b. Oct. 18, 1918, d. Jan. 1, 2015) was

celebrated on February 3rd, with Father David Gierlach presiding.



Easter Lilies

Donations will be gladly accepted for purchasing Easter flowers for decorating the church. **Deadline: Feb. 22, 2015.**

Name _____

No. of lilies @ \$9.00 each _____

In memory / honor of: _____



*Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. Kum ba yah, oh my Lord.
Kum ba yah, my Lord, kum ba yah. Oh Lord, kum ba yah.*



and Crucifer as well attending the Sunday School with mom, are **James Fitzpatrick**, **Anaseini Lino** and myself.

Every Saturday, we are trying to teach action songs and new music for the youth. So Micronesian youth come during the day around 4:00pm while the Tongan youth come at 6:00pm. Hopefully, the Tongan will be able to sing Micronesian songs and vice-versa. If it grows Anaseini and I will teach Culture Dance.

February 1, our youth attended the Oahu Youth Gathering at St Timothy's to watch the Super Bowl. Everyone was cheering for the Sea Hawks, except for 4 boys who cheered for the Patriots. There were 27 youth who went to this event with two buckets of fried chicken for pot luck. Anaseini and I were the chaperones and we all had a good time, and cheered heartily with full stomach.

This month will include the high school retreat, "AWAKE" with Hawaiian Island Ministry. It's time for revitalization and renewal of body, mind and spirit with other teens. Our high school students are big in numbers and the cost per person will be \$100.00 due by February 26. Sign-in sheets will go out this coming Sunday and those who will participate will do some fund-raising to help us. After Feb. 26 the price will go up to \$150.00 per person as plenty of youth from all over Hawaii are joining in. Parents who have youth please mark your calendars March 19th – 21st. Come and see me for more information and also sign up and fill the forms as soon as possible.

These experiences are great because they build new friendships, with people of different backgrounds. The Bible study has been growing and all if not most are of Pacific Island background. The OYG (Oahu Youth Gatherings) with **Sarah Klitzke** expose cultures beyond the Pacific, all within the Episcopal tradition.

Mahalo, Malo, Kinisou, Vinaka Vakalevu and Thank you very much for your great support!

Moce Mada!
Viliami Lino

Youth Report

Aloha everyone and many blessings on you all this New Year from your Youth Ministry. As you all may recall this school year we had quite a number of freshmen, about ten, attending Farrington High School and McKinley High School.

January 4th was our first monthly Oahu Youth Gathering (OYG) of the Diocese held at St. Clements. Altogether signed up for this event were 22 youth participants and the theme was "FORGIVENESS". The youth loved the activities, which allowed every individual to write down things hard to forgive and put in the box. Then we built a wall with those boxes and tried to break it. Two Anglican youths from Aotearoa, New Zealand were with us. Our youth got the message right after the activities through participation. There were four girls and the rest are boys. Fortunately this year I am happy to say I needed a second "chaperone" as there were more than twenty children, six of whom were girls. With much appreciation Anaseini hopped in the right time and helped, not only driving, but chaperoning the young girls.

The growth in number was because majority of these children are from the Bible study started by the Tongan youth of St Elizabeth and the Sunday School called "DISCIPLE" --attendance includes 18 Middle School and High School students both Chuukese and Tongan. The first Bible study for this year was on the first Friday January 2nd. It was a cold and wet Friday evening so the children gathered in **Aunty Fane's** house for bible talk and hot cocoa with hot cup noodles. St. Elizabeth's seems to be the new "cool place to chill" considering we have a growing number of children from around the neighborhood who are well aware of the bible studies every Friday. The Sunday School is looking for resources from "DISCIPLE" to teach our youth. These youth serving Acolytes



Happy Birthday

God's blessings to those with February birthdays!

- Elsie Okubo 2/1
- Myra Okimoto 2/1
- Zachary Okimoto 2/2
- Andrea Sagucio 2/4
- Inasia Thomas 2/7
- Ida Teiti 2/8
- Shiloh Ramelb 2/8
- Alicia Ho Nakata 2/11
- Doris Lam 2/11
- David Kaloi 2/12
- Beatriz Timonio 2/15
- Elyson Badua 2/16
- Edward Fitzpatrick 2/17
- Betty Wong 2/17
- Harlan Arakawa 2/17
- Sue Jean Chun 2/21
- Faye Tsukamoto 2/24
- Tulenkun Tulenkun Jr. 2/25
- Kazner Alexander 2/26
- Herold Unarce 2/26
- Ashton Ballesteros 2/26
- Ethan Anderson 2/27
- Lilia Timonio 2/28

Kathy's Office Makeover-BEFORE

With the possibility of new tile on the floor of the church office, **Kathy Crosier** asked to do a makeover of the space. And what a gorgeous and functional space it is now, with plenty of room to grow.



Kathy's Office AFTER -Beautiful!

Thanks to Kathy for donating the cost of the cabinets and new furniture, and for the hard work of **Charles Steffey, William Bossy** and **Marsono Remigio** to knock down the walls, install flooring, baseboards, closet doors and new cabinets, and paint the walls. It's a great space to work!



Container Homes

This 2 room home is made out of a used shipping container. It sleeps 5 and costs \$11,000. It's in our lot from Feb. 7-14!





Wednesday Morning Breakfast Club



A Poem

when your heart resembles
 the icy road,
 put on your favorite
 sweatshirt.
 when the dull sun
 isn't enough
 to
 thaw the thick
 blood
 in you veins,
 get a blanket and
 a
 good book.
 when you feel
 every snowflake
 in the
 depths of your
 soul
 get a cup of
 hot tea
 and remind
 yourself
 that flowers will bloom
 once again.
 when you feel
 winter
 from the
 tips of your toes
 to the ends of your
 hair,
 tell yourself
 that the sky
 understands
 and don't feel so all
 alone.

-alex gierlach



The Wednesday morning breakfast club at St. Peter's -- with **Lowell and Doug Ing** joining **Preston Lentz** and **Viliani Lino** for the fun!



SHROVE TUESDAY

Shrove Tuesday

February 17

6:00 pm

Can you believe it — it's already time for our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on **Tuesday, Feb. 17th** beginning in the church at 6:00 pm for a short Evening Prayer service. Bring fruit and desserts to share. All this before the season of reflection and repentance begins the next day. Last time to satisfy your sweet tooth before Lent!

Ash Wednesday

February 18

12 Noon and 6:00 pm

Imposition of ashes at both services.



“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return”.