

"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

January 2014

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V Bishop of Hawaii

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Priest Associate

The Reverend Dr.
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Can You Believe It?

The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector

Having folks accept what happened Christmas Day has always been an uphill battle.

After all, did you listen to the story Luke tells us tonight, and did you pay attention to the cast of characters, and do you buy it, any of it?

After all, it's quite a leap to believe in a God who sends the message that God has become a human being (already something you might take seriously only if you're first well juiced on something stronger than V-8), and he makes this announcement not through the fine and upright religious folks of the day, but through shepherds, for Pete's sake, today's equivalent of International Refuse Workers or the Hell's Angels.

Make no mistake, while we have gussied up the whole shepherd scene with soft lights and sentimental music, in those days, shepherds were fully immersed in the animal husbandry business (and yes, some got caught at it)!

When shepherds come to town, grown men run for cover, and mothers grab their children off the street.

They were rough, unpolished, and often crude.

Yet it is to them, not to the Pope, not to the Archbishop of Canterbury, but to these guys whom God chooses to break the news that on this night, without our invitation, without our say so, and without our permission, God comes to us as an infant

child.

And I ask you again, can you believe it?

The Son of God, born in a barn, and the only fanfare comes from old Joseph, teenage Mary, the riffraff shepherds, and three illegal aliens known to us as the Magi.

You'd think if God wanted his presence known on earth, he would have been born in Times Square or Hollywood, not in some meaningless corner of an Empire long gone.

And so the Christmas story has always been a hard sell, and perhaps that explains nearly 2000 years of humanity trying to make Christmas into something it isn't - be- cause what it is, is, well, just so hard to swallow, and if you buy it, you are forever changed, and face it, most of us hate change.

So for two thousand years we have eagerly chipped away at the truth of Christmas - that the Mystery of all that is will stop at nothing, will stoop lower than low, to have us — to have us all.

But this truth of Christmas is now so diluted that it's now reported that 40% of the US population says Christmas is nothing more than a civic holiday with absolutely no connection to matters of faith.

I read yesterday that even 20% of Jewish families have a Christmas tree in their homes, and need I remind you of the millions of Christmas albums sold by such well known Christians as Neil Diamond and



Rector's Message, continued

Barbra Streisand?

(For you younger folks, they are both famously Jewish singers from a past generation).

And so here we are tonight, and I ask you, can you believe it? We are so used to separating our faith life from our so-called real life.

And so on Sundays we pray for peace and a forgiving heart, but so often on Mondays through Saturdays, we swim with the sharks - because in a dog eat dog world, you better know how to bite!

But the fantasy that we can separate the spiritual life from daily life, the myth that the spiritual and the physical occupy different spaces, different places, is exploded, all because of the infant child born to us this night.

God becomes a human being.

A diaper soiling, belly hungry child who will grow into a man who loves and weeps and heals and scolds; and yes, who dies a criminal's death and is raised again on the third day.

We call it the incarnation.

And in the incarnation, the truth that has always been true, that the spiritual and the physical are fused, that the spiritual and the physical are one, today, now, in the workaday, family-centered, exhausted, sometimes happy, sometimes frustrated- beyond-all-reckoning-lives that we each of us live, these lives of ours, in their holiness and in their pettiness, in their honor and in their lies and manipulations, these real, messy, functional and dysfunctional lives that we each of us live - each and every day - are suffused and infused and yes, even bemused, with the holy spirit of God!

God comes to those rascal shepherds instead of popes and kings in order to say to us, there is nothing you can do or say or be that will separate you from my love.

There is no where you can go and no where you can hide that will separate you from my love.

For you see, the truth of our circumstance is not that we invite God to live in our hearts, but that each and every one of us live in the heart of God - now, today, and forever.

Can you believe it?

Tonight, much like Easter Sunday, many will venture into these pews, pews that are otherwise unfamiliar most of the rest of the year.

Perhaps the reason you come is entirely personal, entirely different from the reason that brings your pew mate.

Perhaps you fear that in the week in, and week out of worship, the church may not meet your expectations or fill what you feel you may need.

Perhaps you fear you have sinned, or are unworthy, or are simply worried that your life is somehow less than holy, that this is not the place for you.

Yet this night, you are here. Or perhaps you feel none of these things. Perhaps your life is a good one. Your self-esteem is intact. You have few if any regrets. Yet this night, here you are.

And this night, as we remember to whom and how God chooses to come among us, whether or not you lay judgments upon yourself, whether or not you have fears that may be eating at your soul, whether or not you hold doubts in your heart; it can all be brought as an offering here; and laid at the feet of the child; this child who comes to make all things new.

I know it is a challenge to say that.

I know that it is a challenge to hear it. The child has made all things new? Not really. Not if you just look around.

Wars continue to rage in Syria, The Central African Republic and Afghanistan, among many other places.

Our political discourse still can't seem to rise above the level of a shout or a sneer. Wages for so many are stagnant, the upward mobility so many thought was a sure thing has disappeared, our poor increase in numbers and in misery. Why make the claim that all things are new? We are not the first to ask this question. Probably, we will not be the last.

And yet, no matter your circumstances, no matter your pain, no matter your success, your true identity, if you can only bring

Rector's Message

yourself to believe it, is that of a child of God.

And even more, you are a beloved child of God. Beloved by the child that God himself becomes.

Beloved by a God who knows from bitter experience every form of human difficulty, yet who promises NOT to rescue us from danger, but to be with us always, in the midst of every danger.

Perhaps it is to be reminded of that unalterable fact; perhaps that is why you are here tonight.

This holy night, as we celebrate God becoming one of us, we are invited to remember that we are each of us made in the image of God.

"It's been said that if we really knew how to see with the eyes of the soul, we would see angels going before every person we meet, announcing: "Make way for the image of God! Make way for the image of God!" Long, Testimony, 46.

This night, God says to the whole world, "You are accepted.

Whether you're riding high with the Hell's Angels or whether you're a nine-time divorcé; whether you're an uptight businessman or whether you're just lost and confused; whether you're rich and content or out of your mind with neurosis -- you are accepted.

You are accepted by that which is greater than you, the name of which you may not know.

Don't worry about the name for now; you may find it later.

Don't try to do anything now; later, perhaps, you may do much.

Tonight, don't seek for anything; don't

intend anything.

"Tonight, simply accept the fact that you are accepted." Paul Tillich (paraphrased).

Through this child, by the grace of God, all of humanity is home free, even you, even me.

The desert blooms, the virgin gives birth, and you, my friends, are accepted. Can you believe it?

+amen



Aloha Bluegrass

Boys and Goils, Ladies and Gents, MARK YOUR CALENDAR, tune your geeetar and get ready for the 4th, yes 4th annual Bluegrass Music Festival hosted by St. Elizabeth's and brought to you by those hootenanny hillbillies, aka, the Aloha Music Academy...! Dates, you ask? Mark it down for March 10-13, 2014, with day and evening instructions, play-alongs and sing-a-alongs!! Registration information coming soon to a haystack near you.

Heeeee haw!

Welcome Josie Howard

Please join us as we welcome **Josie Howard** to our St. Elizabeth's family and staff for 2014. Thanks to a generous donation from Al Hee's Waimana Enterprises, Russell Figueroa and Sandwich Isles Communications, Inc., we are delighted to have Josie join our efforts in working with the Micronesian population. Josie is about to receive her Master's of Social Work from the University of Hawaii and is likely the first or one of the first persons of Micronesian descent to obtain this advanced degree. Josie has previously worked throughout the diocese in providing lectures on Micronesian culture. Her work here will include home health aide training, working closely with our after school tutoring program, and helping to further train and expand our sewing co-op. Josie's work will complement the work Fane Lino is doing in the wider diocese as the Pacific Island Missioner.

Annual Neighborhood Christmas Party, Dec. 21

by *Viliani Lino*
St. E's Youth Co-ordinator

It was a pleasure for the Youth to take care of St. Elizabeth's Community Christmas Party, December 21, 2013. **James Fitzpatrick, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Rebecca Kleinschmidt, Leyna Esaki, Anaseini Lino, Nunia Ikavuka, Joshua Yuen-Schat** and one volunteer from Iolani Volunteer Workers and friends from Honolulu Community College Students were the key people during this event to make this dream come true. Very great appreciation goes out to them. These are the number of children we served that day ranging from 17 years old to 2 months old.

Tongan Children: 32
St. E's Youth/Sunday School Children: 20
St. E's Sunday School Children: 18
First To Work Women's Children: 39
Walk In and Sign In on Christmas Party: 20
Children from Different Denomination: 13

Total Children Served with Gift and Goodie Bag = 142

Total Sign In on Christmas Party Day = 92
Children/Parents/Babies

Families we touched in this Community Christmas Party of St. Elizabeth were:

Tongan Families – 10 Families
Micronesian Families – 25 Families
Marshallese Families – 2 Families
Guam Families – 2 Families
American Families – 1 Family
Hawaiian Family – 1 Family
First to Work Families – 10 Families
Filipino Families – 3 Families

Total Families we reached out to = 54
Families with total Children = 142



A big mahalo to the ladies who helped out with **Nora Kurosu** in the Kitchen, Senior Warden, **Caren Esaki** and her family, **Nella Kleinschmidt, Chock family, Papa Jimmy and Mama Lani Kealoha, Kama Wong, Ignacia Terno** and the First to work ladies, my mom (**Fane Lino**) and her outreach list of children and families, **Mother Imelda Padasdao, Heather Manning, Preston Lentz** and our rector **Fr. David**.

Once again for my team, thank you very much! From the wrapping of gifts, decoration, organizing, set up, check names, sign in sheets to games and boy I tell you, it's hard to control such a big group! Thanks to all of you for your help and support, we made it!



Boffo Christmas Concert !

The Polynesian Christmas Concert on December 23rd was a blast and a half! Churches from all over the Kalihi-Palama area turned out with voices ranging from youth choirs to oldsters, with heavenly harmonies and even an all-brass band! We were honored by the presence of our Bishop and his lovely wife Bea as folks crammed into and spilled out of our church doors, windows and walls!

Many thanks to **Fane Lino** and the **Pacific Island Ministry** for organizing, emceeing and hosting this event, which will, hopefully, be done again next year at a **different Episcopal Church in the diocese** (as the **Pacific Island Ministry** spreads the wealth around our diocese).





Christmas Poinsettias

Au, Nancy	In memory of Robert & Rose Shim, Herbert Shim and Reginald K. K. Au
Badua, Caridad	In memory of Elpidio Badua and Edna Barbosa
Bush, Jerry & Sarah	In memory of Annie & Nathaniel Chock and Jennifer Bush
Ching, Patsy & Stuart	In memory of Richard C. & Lucy Ching, and Kenneth T. K. Ching
Chock family	In memory of James L. L. Chock
Chun, Sue Jean & Family	In memory of Walter Chun
Goo, Beryl	With prayers for world peace
Goo, Millie & Jerry	In thanksgiving
Heltz, Michael & Lotus	In memory of Harriet and Lawson Green and Stewart Green
Hoe, Allen	In memory of 1LT Nainoa Hoe and in honor of RagDolls2Love
Hue, Raymond & Miriam	In memory of Rev. Lawrence & Mrs. Grace Ozaki and Leona K. and Hazel Hue
Ishida, Tom & Peggy	In memory of Linda H. Ishida
Iwerks, Estella	In memory of Yuen Lin & Stella Lau
Jung, Dorothy	In memory of Richard Jung and Ten Fook & Mabel Ho
Kau, Francis & Pearl	In memory of Ruth Ho Fung and Joscelind Fung Zee
Kealoha Ohana	In memory of Lilinoe, James & Shane
Kokubun, Charles & Judith	In memory of Mr./Mrs. Takeshi Kokubun and Mr./Mrs Minoru Nakaishi
Kuniyoshi, Mildred	In memory of Johnny Kuniyoshi
Lentz, Preston & Mary Ann	In honor of our St. Elizabeth's Church family
Leybag, Victorina	In memory of Bernardo Leybag, Maximiliano, Adriana Salazar
Ling, Juliette	In memory of Alin and Elizabeth Mark Ling
Medeiros, Clara	In memory of William E. Medeiros
Okimoto, Myra	In memory of the Rev. & Mrs. Philip Fukao and Mr. & Mrs. Shigetaro Ozaki
Ozaki, Lani	In memory of John Ozaki
Padasdao, Illuminada	In memory of Florentino Padasdao, Avelino Padasdao, Leocadio, Elmer Padasdao, Triponia Abad
Padasdao, Imelda	In thanksgiving for God's blessings

Ramos, Tomas	In memory of Vic and Elmer, Senang and Leonora
Suyat, Margarita	In thanksgiving to the Almighty Father for his blessings
Tam, Audrey	In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond J. Tam and in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Frank S. Tyau, Mr. Wilfred Tyau
Tsukamoto, Faye	In memory of Jack & Masa Tsukamoto
Yap, Frank & Sue	In memory of Christina Yap, Florence Yap, Frank Yap Sr., and Lina Doo
Young, Larry & Arleen	In memory of Juliet & Tim Chong Young

Mahalo for beautifying our church!



Pledge Report

Many thanks to all who have pledged for 2014!

We have received 78 pledges totaling over \$110,000! It's never too late to pledge — pledge cards are available on the narthex table.

Our goal is to have 100 pledging families, so if you were just waiting for the right now: now's the TIME!

THANK YOU for your commitment to the Lord's work at St. Elizabeth's!

Fane Lino, Diocesan Missioner

Okay, be honest, you've been wondering just what IS the job of our dear **Fane Lino**, the diocesan missioner. As you may know, for the last nearly two years, Fane has picked up the plow left in mid-field with the untimely loss of our friend Fr. Saimone Lino. Fane has been working diligently with folks from St. Nicholas', St. Peter's, and St. Mary's, and, as we make our way into 2014, you should expect to see a whole lot more of Fane and the Pacific Island Ministry coming to a church near YOU! And so you are in the loop, here's a short version of her job description! Please pray for Fane and for this wonderful ministry that is truly directed at the entire diocese.



Position Title: **Diocesan Missioner**
 Status: **Three quarter time, non-exempt**
 Supervised By: **The Bishop**

Primary Purpose: Under the supervision of the Bishop, the primary responsibilities are to identify and bring in to the various parishes that make up The Episcopal Church in Hawaii ("TECH") those persons of Pacific Island heritage, with a particular focus on newer immigrants. The missioner is to serve as a resource person and training aide to the various parishes in TECH regarding this population. The missioner will visit each of the Oahu parishes (and outer island parishes as finances permit) to strategize on reaching this population and introducing them to TECH.

Essential Functions:

- + To grow the membership of TECH.
- + Assist TECH parishes in identifying the target population within their borders, reaching out and inviting that population into the church.
- + Initiate reading programs at each parish to encourage Pacific Islander participation in the church.



- + Initiate music/ukulele lesson programs at each parish to encourage Pacific Islander participation in the church.
- + Initiate home health aide training at the various parishes to Pacific Islanders.
- + Identify and train Pacific Islanders to take on leadership roles within the various parishes.
- + Facilitate cross-cultural training in the parishes.



Attendance

12/1	Sunday Eucharist	193
12/4	Wednesday services	39
12/8	Sunday Eucharists	170
12/11	Wed. Healing Eucharist	14
12/15	Sunday Eucharists	170
12/18	Wed. Healing Eucharist	14
12/22	Sunday Eucharists	182
12/24	Christmas Eve	181
12/25	Christmas Day	91
12/29	Sunday Eucharists	158



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with
January birthdays!

Lynette Shim	1/1
Enriqueta Haller	1/1
Awaeliery Farata	1/2
Leo John Pangelina	1/5
Serenity Michael	1/6
Nella Kleinschmidt	1/9
Rebecca Kleinschmidt	1/10
Charles Steffey Jr. "Bubba"	1/11
Genevieve Hayakawa	1/11
Charlotte Jarrett	1/13
Troy Esaki	1/14
Soo Kil Park	1/14
Sylvia Rowland	1/14
Tarla Francis	1/14
Shaianne Sunagawa	1/18
Elyas Badua	1/18
Sharlene Yap	1/19
CharleySue Steffey	1/19
Jane Leong	1/20
Melba Meyshine	1/20
Rachel Marlow	1/21
Mark Anderson	1/25
Imensy Eichy	1/27
Iris Park	1/28
Kermelo White	1/28
Susan Kau	1/29
Allison Marlow	1/31

The Baptism of the Lord

"Then Jesus arrived at the Chhattahoochee from south Georgia to be dipped by John. But John tried to put him off. "Look," he said, "I ought to be dipped by you, yet you are coming to me." Jesus replied, "Please let me be baptized right now, for it is proper for us to give meaning in this way to all that's right." Then John consented. Now, when Jesus was immersed and just as he came up from the water, the sky was split and he saw God's Spirit settling on him like a dove alighting. And you know, a voice spoke from the sky, "This is my dear Son; I'm proud of him." *Mt 3:13, The Cotton Patch Gospel*



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Cleaning Up

The young Leo's were
out
today
blue bags and plastic gloves
moving trash to bags and
bags to trucks
all to reveal
clean earth
shiny stones and lo and behold
even
some green grass.



Who knows what lies
beneath
the accumulation of
all that junk,
a pearl of great price?
a treasure?
a song?

Mark your calendars

St. Elizabeth's Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 26, 2014

Committee chairs, please submit your reports by Jan. 20th!