

*"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 2015

## Turning Left

The Right Reverend  
Robert L. Fitzpatrick  
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend  
David J. Gierlach  
Rector

The Reverend  
Imelda S. Padasdao,  
Priest Associate

The Reverend Dr.  
Gerald G. Gifford.  
Rector Emeritus

The Reverend Peter S. M. Fan,  
Cantonese Language Priest

Hsiao Ying "Ajaan" Chen  
Choir Director

Marie Wang  
Organist

Katherine Crosier  
Parish Administrator  
Editor and Layout  
Music Consultant

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Junior Warden

Dawn Yadao  
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*The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector*

I must confess to you that I have a terrible sense of direction.

If I'm getting off an elevator and my instinct says turn right, the place I'm looking for is always to the left.

Same goes with driving!

If there's a long way to get somewhere, I'll find it.

I share this with you not so that my wife can happily nod in agreement, but because of something that strikes me in today's gospel lesson. ....something about how so many of us may be making a wrong turn when it comes to our relationship with God.

Maybe it's not as common among my cradle Episcopalian friends, but for a lot of us who come from a different religious tradition, it's as common as white rice.

Here's how one gal says it, and I wonder if some of you can relate:

"You can take the woman out of church but you can't take church out of the woman.

Or so I used to think as my mother carried out dramas of temptation, sin, and redemption by means of ice cream and broccoli.

She had left behind the ceremonies and celebrations, but not the anxiety that all mistakes are unforgivable.

We believe in perfection, which ruins everything, because the perfect is not

only the enemy of the good, it is also the enemy of the realistic, the possible, and the fun." R. Solnit, *The New Yorker*, 12/22&29/14, 76. (paraphrased).

Meaning, I think, that many of us believe that our task in life is to walk the straight and narrow, to do good, to follow the rules, all so we can earn the love of God.

In other words, many of us spend a lifetime beating ourselves up for our inevitable failures, mistakes, yes, sins, thinking that unless we are perfect, God will never love us.

And that's what hit me between the eyes with today's gospel lesson, the baptism of our Lord, which is followed by the Spirit pushing Jesus into the desert to face his demons.

That's the lesson.

You know it as well as I do.

And what I see today, what I've missed the 999 times I've read this lesson before, what is right before my eyes, is this:

That the love of God doesn't come AFTER we face our demons, it doesn't come as a RESULT of our efforts to please God: the love of God comes FIRST; before we confront our demons, before we embark on a life of trying to be faithful.

That's the astounding news we hear when Jesus steps into the muddy river, submits to John's baptism, and sees the



# Rector's Message, continued

heavens torn apart with the Holy Spirit descending like a dove:

“This is my son, the beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

The love is there first, at the beginning, freely given, not earned.

Now, you may be thinking to yourself, that's all fine and dandy for Jesus, but I'm not Jesus.

What makes you think God's love is there at the beginning for ME?

I will tell you.

As with Jesus, so with us.

That's why Paul tells us over and over:

“We were ... buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” Rom 6:4.

And again:

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.” Rom. 8:17

In other words, we stand on the shoulders of Jesus; and the love given to him is given to us as well, not as something to be sought after or earned, but as the free gift of a loving God who never lets us go.

And it is from that place, snuggled up in the love of God, that we, like Jesus, can then go off to confront our demons.

The demons Jesus faces are the demons of power, fame and wealth.

Your demons might be an abusive childhood or alcohol or a feeling of self-hate or an intolerance of people who are different.

We all have our demons; yet we are called to confront them as part of our journey to spiritual maturity NOT to GET TO the place of God's love; but we confront them in the firm assurance that God is on our side, deeply in love with you and you and me, and from that place we can find the courage to face and eventually, perhaps, even embrace, even forgive, the demons in our lives.

We often say that the heart of Christianity is love, and in a sense it is.

But we modern people have so gussied up that word, so sentimentalized it with Valentine's Day cards and mushy romantic

doo wops that it really has lost the meaning intended by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Maybe a better word for the heart of Christianity is not love, but reconciliation.

Making broken things whole.

Doing the hard work of digging deep to see my role in conflicts.

Examining my past hurts; hurts received and hurts inflicted; and letting a trusted other in on the whole process.

This is the road to the spiritual life.

This is what it means to be Christian.

It's why my friends who say they are spiritual but not religious are, I think, missing the point; because the spiritual life, to really be lived out, requires community.

We need each other to bounce off of, to comfort, to challenge and sometimes even to confront.

Making broken things whole is not easy work, and it is not something I can do by myself.

We need the community, otherwise, I just keep turning right out of the elevator when the true destination is over there, to the left!

Things got broken in the beginning when our parents in the garden decided to embrace the one thing never intended for us to embrace: the knowledge of good and evil.

We weren't then and we are not now equipped to know the difference between good and evil.

The fact is, arguments over who is right and what is wrong lie at the heart of every war between nations, families and spouses.

And if we ever needed any proof that we are not and never have been equipped to know right from wrong, especially as a church, just consider that the best religious

# Rector's Message

minds and the most sophisticated political minds agreed to kill the Son of God....if we can't get that one right, how can we expect to get it right in deciding whether cousin Blanche should have left her third husband or whether democracy is the cure for what ails some middle eastern country?

So this morning, we come to the riverbank with Jesus, and step into the Jordan.

And there, as we feel the mud squish between our toes, as we feel the water pouring over our heads, may we too be open to the God who loves us from the start, who takes us by the hand to face our own demons, and who never, ever, not in life and not in death, leaves us alone.

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Rom 8:38-39

+amen

*“Holding on to anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die.” -Buddha*



## Attendance

Dec. 3	Wednesday Healing & Eucharist	32
Dec. 7	Sun. Eucharist & Vespers	237
Dec. 10	Wednesday Healing Service	26
Dec. 14	Sun. Eucharist & Vespers	182
Dec. 17	Wednesday Healing Service	26
Dec. 21	Sun. Eucharist & Vespers	210
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve/Day	304
Dec. 28	Sun. Eucharist & Vespers	195

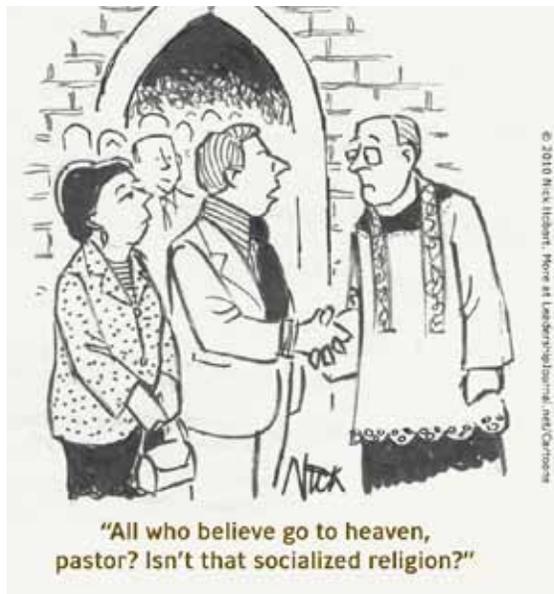
*When you leave this earth, you can take nothing you have received, only what you have given: a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice, and courage.*  
--St. Frances of Assisi.

## Diocesan Priests-in-Training



Can you spot some familiar faces?

*“At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will. This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God in us. It is so to speak his name written in us, as our poverty, as our indigence, as our dependence, as children of God. It is like a pure diamond, blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it, we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely.....I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere.” --T. Merton.*





## Neighborhood Christmas Party

The Youth Christmas party was a great success with over 70 children receiving gifts from the one and only Santa Claus, fresh in from the North Pole (I know, I cleaned up after the reindeer!) who greeted the children with plenty of Ho Ho Hos, even the smiling ones, even the crying ones!

The Youth leaders put on a great day what with lovely Christmas decorations, super fun games in the parking lot, a kazillion pizzas and an all round good time! Our very own **Nella Kleinschmidt** was Santa's super elf, having single handedly arranged for gifts for each and every one of these children, which the assistant elves spent many hours lovingly wrapping (the gifts, not the children....)

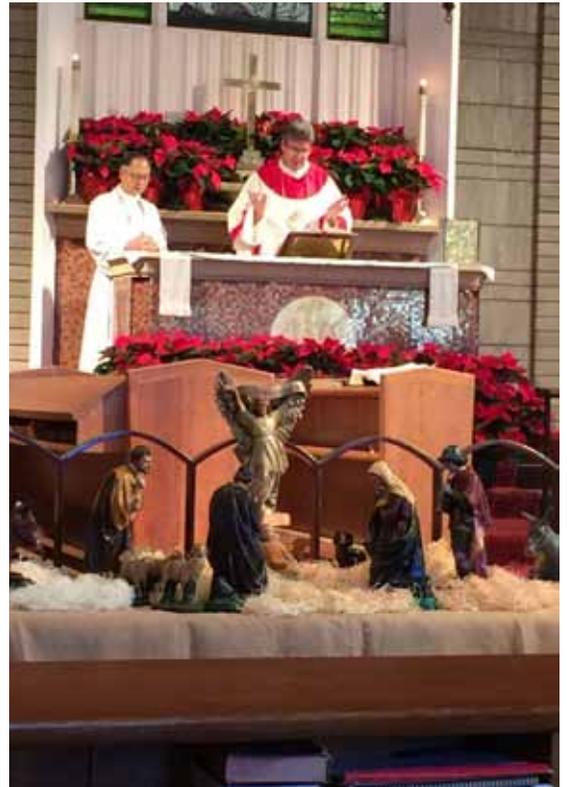
# Christmas Eve



Christmas Eve was a joy to behold. We were treated with the melodious music of the Tongan choir, the beautiful Bell Choir, then enchanted by the dance of our youth, all capped off with the angelic voices of **Ana, Kauai and Ma'ata** who harmonized (*a cappella*) the beautiful *Be Still And Know That I Am God*; all interspersed with readings from Testaments both Older and Newer, as we listened in once again to our story told from of old. Many thanks to all who made this beautiful evening of wonder and joy!



Joshua Yuen-Schat, home from college, played the organ.



*Not to be  
outdone*

were the Christmas Caroling Tongans who visited many a home singing yuletide carols from Hawaii Kai to Pearl City! What a splendid tradition to share with us all!

# Mahalo

*to each and everyone who donated lovely poinsettias:*

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Mr. & Mrs. Robert G. Albert                                     | 1 | In memory of the Liu family members   |
| Nancy Au  | 3 | In memory of Robert & Rose Shim, Herbert Shim and Reginald K. K. Au   |
| Caridad Badua   | 1 | In memory of Elpidio Badua  |
| Sarah Bush  | 1 | In memory of Annie & Nellie Chock, Jennifer Bush  |
| Patsy & Stuart Ching  | 2 | In memory of Kenneth T. K. Ching and Richard C. & Lucy Ching  |
| Chock family  | 2 | In memory of James L. L. Chock and Yuk Oi Dang  |
| Chun Family   | 1 | In memory of Walter T. H. Chun  |
| Elizabeth, Jan, Melanie, Chadwick, Zander, Chris, Noelle & Xavi | 2 | In thanksgiving for Mary Ann & Preston Lentz and their work at St. Elizabeth's  |
| Beryl Goo   | 1 | In honor of the Goo family  |
| Jerry & Millie Goo  | 2 | In thanksgiving   |
| Michael & Lotus Heltz   | 2 | In memory of Harriet & Lawson Green, Stewart Green  |
| Allen K. Hoe  | 2 | In memory of 1st Lt. Nainoa Hoe, and in honor of RagDolls2Love  |
| Tom & Peggy Ishida  | 1 | In memory of Linda H. Ishida  |
| Estella Iwerks  | 1 | In memory of Yuen Lin & Stella Lau  |
| Dorothy Jung  | 1 | In memory of Richard Jung, Ten Fook Ho and Mabel Ho   |
| Pearl & Francis Kau   | 2 | In memory of Ruth Ho Fung and Joscelind Fung Zee  |
| Jimmy & Lani Kealoha  | 3 | In memory of Lilinoe Kealoha Wong, James Kealoha III, Shane Kealii Kealoha  |
| Charles & Judith Kokubun  | 2 | In memory of Mr & Mrs Kokubun and Mr & Mrs Nakaishi families  |
| Mildred Kuniyoshi   | 1 | In memory of Johnny Kuniyoshi   |
| Melanie Langi   | 8 | In memory of Arlene Glory, Anthony Glory, Randall Glory, Christopher Paulo, Isaiah Paulo, Mele Sivale Langi and Cheryl Higa |
| Juliette Ling   | 2 | In memory of Elizabeth Ling   |



- |                      |   |  |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Susie Murphy         | 1 | In memory of Jane Dunbar   |
| Maile Nicholas       | 5 | In memory of Arthur Woo, Nobuo Oshita, Tom See-Foon, Nokaoi Nicholas and Makahilahila Nicholas |
| Isabel Padasdao      | 1 | In memory of Severo & Edgar Padasdao, Ricardo & Perfetua Mapili                                |
| Redemption Ramos     | 1 | In memory of Denia Pantateon Ramos and Potenciano Natividad                                    |
| Joseph Tolentino     | 1 | In memory of Manaela Tolentino   |
| Faye Tsukamoto       | 2 | In memory of Jack & Masa Tsukamoto and Ralph Kato  |
| Roger & Elaine Tyau  | 2 | In memory of Doris & Henry Tyau and Mr/Mrs Tim Chong Young                                     |
| Sue & Frank Yap      | 3 | In memory of Christina Yap, Florence Yap & Frank Yap Sr.                                       |
| Arleen & Larry Young | 2 | In memory of Juliet & Tim Chong Young  |



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"Here's a résumé from a candidate who says he can't grow a church but loves attending conferences to learn how."



# Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with January birthdays!

Lynette Shim	1/1
Enriqueta Haller	1/1
Akimasa Eis	1/1
Awaeliery Farata	1/2
Grand Olobwy	1/3
Leo John Pangelina	1/5
Serenity Michael	1/6
Vernon Anaya	1/7
Kama Wong	1/8
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
Dawn Yadao	1/16
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
Jack Simpson	1/23
Mark Anderson	1/25
Imensy Eichy	1/27
Iris Park	1/28
Kermelo White	1/28
Susan Kau	1/29
Allison Marlow	1/31

## Pledge Report

**Many thanks to all who have pledged for 2015!**



We have received 66 pledges to date, totaling \$128,314!

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



Recently, to honor the many language groups we have worshipping at St. Elizabeth's, we have begun reading the first lesson in Hawaiian, Chuukese, Tongan, Cantonese and Ilocano, rotating each week. Here, our sainted **Auntie Lani Kealoha** brings

music to our ears as she reads sacred scripture with the words of this aina, this land, of Hawai'i.



*This is a home made from a shipping container. It will be on-site soon for a week or so!*

## FACE on the Move!

FACE (Faith Action for Community Equity) is on the move in confronting and helping solve our very real housing crisis. Meetings are being held every other day with State, Federal and local government officials, from the Governor and Mayor to the council people and legislators to developers and legal eagles to create a coalition of all parties, to resolve differences that too often lead to standstills and not progress, and to move forward in building a substantial supply of housing that is affordable not only to the least among us, but for our teachers and cops and firefighters and nurses and teachers. If you'd like to jump on this train just give Fr. David or James Fitzpatrick an elbow to the ribs and we'll get you signed up faster than you can say *supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*.....

# Sunday School News

Happy Epiphany to all! The Sunday School children had a very busy Advent, preparing for the gathering and sharing the gifts of hope, peace and love with the children and families in ICODEI, singing and collecting money during the offertory!

During Advent, arts and crafts teacher, **Doris Lam**, helped the children craft and paint beads and make them into a fancy necklace for themselves or a loved one.

The Sunday School children and their neighborhood friends celebrated Christmas at STE with a fantastic Christmas party, filled with food, fellowship and merriment on Saturday, December 20th! Thanks to the Youth Group, and head elf helper, **Nella Kleinschmidt**, more than 70 children received gifts from Santa!

Each Sunday in Advent, the Sunday school participated in the opening service by reading a scripture and lighting a candle on the advent wreath as we counted down to Christmas Day.

On Christmas Day, the 4 Advent candles and the center white candle, the Christ Candle, were all lit. Fr. David gathered the children forward for the blessing of the crèche and the 12 days of Christmastide began.

The second Sunday of Christmas, the Sunday school children had their Christmas party, not receiving gifts, but thanking God for gathering and celebrating the birth of Jesus. It was fellowship, food and fun as the children made one last collection for the children in Icodei during the offertory! Thank you to all who supported the children and their efforts in giving and helping to share with beautiful people and help in the town of Bungoma, Kenya. Interesting to note, when we were talking about the children in Kenya, one Sunday school student chimed in, "I saw a video about people in Africa and they are so poor, they don't have anything!" They do have hope! Thanks to all of you, St. Elizabeth's Church is sending \$2,714.00 to the people in Bungoma! And Fr. David is quick to remind me, that is in US dollars... converted to Kenyan shillings... we are sending 247,231 shillings! Now, the people will be able to add a cow or 2 to their menagerie, couple goats, a flock of chickens, a lot of bee hives.... And a lot more people will be working!

We will look forward to Shrove Tuesday, February 17th! Get ready to fill up on pancakes, pancakes, and more pancakes!!! Did someone mention French toast?

Mark your calendars

**St. Elizabeth's Annual Meeting**  
**Sunday, January 25, 2015**

Committee chairs, please submit your reports by Jan. 19th!

# grief and sorrow

on 9/11  
fire  
comes from the sky  
jets  
that reunite  
families  
become bombs  
severing limbs  
and ties.  
oh the grief!  
oh the sorrow!  
its  
foolishness, its evil,  
only  
matched  
(or is it exceeded?)  
by our collective  
revenge.  
can we  
absorb  
the  
evil?  
forgive the perpetrators?  
reject knee-jerk  
revenge?  
which continues today  
even  
at the  
wedding party  
blown  
to kingdom come  
in  
Afghanistan  
yesterday.  
2,977  
died that day  
251,814  
dead  
in response  
80 for every 1  
oh the grief!  
oh the sorrow!

