

"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

July 2018

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V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

The Reverend
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Priest Associate

The Reverend Dr.
Gerald G. Gifford.
Rector Emeritus

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

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Choir Director

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The Rev. David J. Gierlach

Last Saturday a few thousand folks showed up at the State Capitol to stand against the recent practice of our government to arrest and separate parents and children who cross the border — which some call border security and others call state sanctioned kidnapping.

And there in the midst of this gathering of thousands is a fellow holding a large sign that says in large letters: "Believe in Jesus or burn in hell!"

And at first glance I have to say that I summed up this fellow as a right wing fundamentalist extremist who's views of Christianity couldn't be further removed from my own...

But as the week wore on, and I continued to have images of that sign, as I read and reread today's gospel, I began to wonder if maybe this guy isn't right after all.

Now, before you start racing for the exits, let me say that I'm not suggesting that "Believe in Jesus or burn in Hell" means one must make a confession of faith or that one must accept Jesus as personal Lord and Savior (something that is found nowhere in Scripture despite the insistence of so-called Bible Christians that that's the only ticket to salvation).

No, what I began to think about is: what does it really mean to believe in Jesus?

What is the reality of Hell?

And my meanderings got me thinking that with a "yes I believe" uttered from my mouth, or a signature on a membership card or even submitting to baptism.

To believe in Jesus, as we hear in today's gospel lesson, as the disciples are sent out, means simply to hope for, and to extend, common human decency to anyone and to everyone in need.

Jesus tells us that today.

Go out.

Bring nothing but some slippers, a pair of shorts and a walking stick.

No iphone, no AAA card, no wallet — just go, and trust in the kindness of strangers.

Where such kindness is displayed, there is a disciple of Jesus, even if the one doing the kindness calls herself a Buddhist, a Hindu, an atheist, even a Roman Catholic!

Where such kindness is denied, even if he is Archbishop of Canterbury, even if he is a monk of great reputation, even if she is a born again jet setting evangelical, they are not followers of Jesus.

Don't take my word for it.

This is the very definition of judgment day as Jesus tells it through Matthew's gospel.

I was naked and you clothed me, hungry, and you fed me, lonely, and you stopped by for a visit.

Kindness to the needy is the very definition of the kingdom of heaven.

Refusing kindness to the needy is your ticket to hell.

Which brings me back to the "burn in hell" part of that fellow's sign.

Who on earth can imagine the savior of the universe sending someone to never ending agony because he or she didn't sign up for the right secret decoder ring?

And if that's what the man with the sign had in mind, well, I pray that his eyes will one day be opened.

But his words aren't without truth.

Meaning, when we turn away from one another, when we withhold common human compassion from especially the vulnerable, when we retreat into our own little boxes of tribe or race or creed; we are cut off from life as it's meant



to be — and isn't that the very definition of hell?

Bringing this closer to home, that openness of spirit — trusting in the goodness of others, a willingness to be good to others, why, this is often hardest to do with those we know the best.

Those we know best are so easily summed up, defined, known through and through, and yes, too often dismissed.

As Mark Twain once commented, “familiarity breeds contempt, . . . , and children.”

Jesus gets a dose of that today when he arrives back home.

Remember, just a few weeks ago, his immediate family tried to get him tossed into the State Hospital.

Imagine the stories they told the neighbors when they returned:

“Not only has he lost his marbles, but he's disowned us, yammering some nonsense about his real family being those miscreants and loose women who are dragging around after him!”

No wonder when he shows up today, all he gets is the hairy eyeball, or to use Biblical language, “they were scandalized by him.”

They have him in a box: a box of preconceived notions, a box that defines him by station in life, stereotype in life.

And Jesus rejects all of it.

The Incarnate God, who comes to us not as Pope or King, but as an ordinary man, in a backwater country, says a lot about who you and I might really be too, doesn't it?

Do you define, meaning, do you limit yourself, because of where you're from or what you do for a living?

Do we limit those around us, especially our nearest and dearest, because somehow we've forgotten that we come from God, and shall return to God too?

Jesus invites us out of that trap; with the reminder that we are each of us beloved daughters and sons of God — that our destiny is to become co-creators with God, as God continues to give birth to all of creation.

And the best way to open our mind to our true nature, to our true destiny, is to start by letting go of being afraid.

The disciples are sent out with nothing, so that they may come to see that they already possess everything!

How many of us worry about what may invade our lives: whether it is our current national panic attack over immigrants or Trump or our collective fear of death or disease or loss of control?

Opening ourselves, crawling out of our tiny boxes that for too long limit and define limited and tiny lives, well, it opens up whole new worlds.

As the philosopher once observed:

Don't fear the bad stuff in life; the disappointments, the failures, the loss, because in everything

that comes our way is the hand of God, shaping us into who and what we are destined to become.

Recognize that. . . .

“This being human is like being a guest house,
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they're a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still, treat each guest honorably, He may be clearing you out for some new delight!

This dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.”

-Rumi (modified).

It's what Paul is getting at this morning when he boasts not about his money or success or his holiness but about his abject weakness, the thorn in his side.

It is, he seems to be aying, not through our coolness, but through our cracks that God's light can shine through us into the world.

He seems to be saying, don't regret your cracks: your loss, your weakness, your sin, even your shame, it is through these cracks that God's light shines into the world.

We are living in challenging times.

For many of us, the current political winds are blowing dangerously dry, threatening cherished freedoms, and long held expectations of who and what we believe ourselves to be.

Growing angry or cynical is an inviting response.

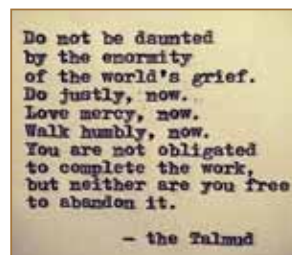
But we are called to another place.

We are called to take the time to look carefully, even at our worst enemies, even at that which seems thoroughly corrupt, and wonder, if even there, we might catch a glimpse of God's Spirit.

When life has dumped a pile of manure at your doorstep, maybe Jesus says today:

Without the manure, there'll be no roses!

+amen



BEAUTIFUL POEM BY MAYA ANGELOU

“WHEN I SAY THAT ‘I AM A CHRISTIAN’, I AM NOT SHOUTING THAT ‘I AM CLEAN LIVING. I’M WHISPERING ‘I WAS LOST, BUT NOW I’M FOUND AND FORGIVEN.’

WHEN I SAY ‘I AM A CHRISTIAN’, I DON’T SPEAK OF THIS WITH PRIDE. I’M CONFESSING THAT I STUMBLE AND NEED CHRIST TO BE MY GUIDE.

WHEN I SAY ‘I AM A CHRISTIAN’, I’M NOT TRYING TO BE STRONG. I’M PROFESSING THAT I’M WEAK AND NEED HIS STRENGTH TO CARRY ON.

WHEN I SAY ‘I AM A CHRISTIAN’, I’M NOT BRAGGING OF SUCCESS. I’M ADMITTING I HAVE FAILED AND NEED GOD TO CLEAN MY MESS.

WHEN I SAY ‘I AM A CHRISTIAN’, I’M NOT CLAIMING TO BE PERFECT. MY FLAWS ARE FAR TOO VISIBLE, BUT GOD BELIEVES I AM WORTH IT.

WHEN I SAY ‘I AM A CHRISTIAN’, I STILL FEEL THE STING OF PAIN. I HAVE MY SHARE OF HEARTACHES, SO I CALL UPON HIS NAME.

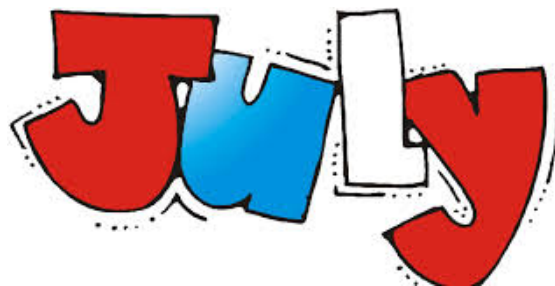
WHEN I SAY ‘I AM A CHRISTIAN’, I’M NOT HOLIER THAN THOU, I’M JUST A SIMPLE SINNER WHO RECEIVED GOD’S GOOD GRACE.



Congratulations to our graduates, **Joshua** from college and **Naomi and Tea** from High School!!! Way to go gang!! Happily looking on are a few of St. E's finest, **Sue Yap, Patsy Ching and Nancy Au!!!**



And for youse heading to college, be sure to submit a scholarship application to **Mrs. Arleen Young** if some financial aid might be some help!



Happy Birthday

God’s blessings on those with July birthdays!

Craig Peterson	07/02
Richard Roke	07/03
Ronald Roke	07/03
Faith Chock	07/04
Alan Esaki	07/10
Ruby Wai Ching Chock	07/12
Carly Venenciano	
Jeldan Romualdo	07/13
Kody Hayashi	07/15
Onlyone Helly	07/16
Mildred Kuniyoshi	07/17
Mosese Langi	07/18
Nathan Neeto	
Lisa-Anne Mitsuka Chan	07/19
Tim Blaisdell	07/20
Frank Yap	
Lynnsey Ho	07/21
Richard Yee	07/23
Barry Zane	07/24
Mary Ann Lentz	07/25
Jerek Jong	07/26
Jean Hirashiki	07/27
Lydia Joseph	
Fran Kramer	07/28
Juliette Ling	07/30
Jordan Rico	
Michael Lum	07/31



Congratulations on your ordination to the Deaconate!



Congratulations to **Preston Lentz** and **Mark Haworth** on their ordination!



After what? A century or two of preparation and exams and brain reconfiguring and who knows what else, here they are, our two newly ordained transitional deacons ready to head into the fields of our Lord! A glorious 2 hour service (which felt like 10 minutes) at the Cathedral on June 9 at long last brought the desired end to all this work! A little bird says that our beloved **Preston and Mary Ann** shall move to St. Christopher's in Kailua for the next 6 to 9 months. The day following the ordinations, we celebrated our nearly two years of fun with **Mark and Jill** and bid them both A Hui Hou as they head to St. John the Baptist in Ma`ile for the duration of Mark's diaconate. As usual, the planned "finger foods" turned into a bonanza buffet which delighted the stomachs of all!!



"I used to pray that God would feed the hungry, or do this or that, but now I pray that he will guide me to do whatever I'm supposed to do, what I can do. I used to pray for answers, but now I'm praying for strength. I used to believe that prayer changes things, but now I know that prayer changes us and we change things."

- Mother Teresa



Sunday School News

By Sue Yap



June Attendance

Sunday, June 3,.....	234
Sunday, June 10,.....	204
Sunday, June 17,.....	193
Sunday, June 24,.....	140



The melodious melodies emanating from our musical magicians is a marvelous miracle each and every week! Many thanks to **Miss Ajaon and Marie** for their dedication, skills and sheer talent! Not to mention the dedicated hand bell ringers and vocalists who work so hard to provide heavenly wafts of wonder for us all!!!! Thank you folks!!!!!!!!!!



Many thanks to our talented handbell choir!!



A Message from the Youth Coordinator

By Melanie Langi

Hello All,

Welcome July! Each time I write this article I'm always reminded how swift the days pass. I'm also reminded to breath in each day with thankfulness.

How is your summer so far? Long summer days and warm nights...really warm nights! I welcome the trade winds anytime!

For me, summer always brings back fond memories of my childhood growing up in Mililani. Back in those days Mililani was just a little town, where all the neighbors knew each other and you couldn't get away with anything. I remember racing down the street barefoot with your slippahs on your hands because barefoot meant you run faster. We didn't have all the electronic gadgets our kids have today, we had barbies, polly pocket, monchichi's, Saturday morning cartoons, tamaguchi's, riding our bikes and actually played with our friends outside till the sun set. I remember my grandma saying once you leave the house you stay outside all day, and if you're thirsty...drink water from the waterhose. And if we couldn't find our friends we would go to each friends house looking for them. How did we know what house our friends were at? One indication. All our bikes would be in the driveway, indicating everyone was there.

I also remember how all us neighborhood kids would always read together. One day, our friend Jessica got an idea for us to do a play from one of the Berenstain Bears books we were reading. We excitedly prepared for our play. We made bear ears with headbands, card board, black marker and tape. We made a stage in her patio and used rope and a white sheet for a curtain. We also made homemade tickets inviting all our neighbors to the play. We even set out chairs for our audience. Our parents, aunts uncles and some neighbors came. Just reminiscing about this made me smile.



Now as I'm older I want to create memories for my own children so that when they look back they will smile too!

What memories are you creating this summer?
C'mon create your own fond memories, it's never too late!

In its 25th year, the Kalihi Palama Late Night Basketball League offers a consistent, positive summer recreational activity for the youth; focusing on more than just the fundamentals of the game, but mentoring, nutrition education, positive reinforcement, community service, educational and skill-building activities, and sportsmanship.

Our very own St. Elizabeth "Saints" Senior boys basketball boys are participate's of this Late Night Basketball League, playing **every Thursday at Palama Settlement Gym**. I'm very impressed on how well our Saints work, communicate and play well together.

I would also like to recognize our very own **Nathan Neeto** for taking an initiative in the Leadership role for the team! I'm really proud of you Nathan! Keep doing the job of excellent.

On June 24-June 29 Hui Pu Camp Campers jetted off to Camp Mokuleia for a week of fun, fun and more fun! On the first day they got to enjoy a Luau with hula dancers and a fire knife dance...nah just kidding. Lol! Other activities like canvas painting, and a high rope challenge are just a few activities the kids could look forward to. Not to mention the beach and NO PARENTS!! They're literally HAPPY CAMPERS!

This Summer, I have decided to continue our youth bible study throughout the summer. Same day, same time and same location. **Fridays 7pm at St. E's**. All youth and the youth at heart are always welcome. Come journey with us through the bible and fellowship with us!

Let's have fun and create more fond memories this Summer. Next month will come quicker than you'll blink. And remember August is **BACK TO SCHOOL! YAY! LOL!**

Yours Truly,

Melanie Langi



“POVERTY EXISTS NOT BECAUSE WE CANNOT FEED THE POOR,
BUT BECAUSE WE CANNOT SATISFY THE RICH.”



Every Saturday we serve upwards of 100 primarily local people with a hot breakfast, some prayers and some conversation. When available, toiletries and clothes are also shared. Slowly, many of the houseless now participate in setting up, and in cooking and cleaning up afterward, as we move away from server/served relationships to relationships of companionship, friendship and understanding. YOU are most welcome to drop down any Saturday from 6 am till 8 am and check out the scene!



Ahui Hou Ed, Liis and Marcus!!
Blessings, Safe travels and Congratulations!



Sadly, Ed, Liis and Marcus will be taking their leave as Uncle Sam has reassigned Ed to someplace called "Kentucky"....While we here at V and B Central have never heard of the place, we trust they shall be safe, warm and well until they return home to us. So sorry for Grandpa Bishop and Lovely Grandma Bea! Surely they will miss Grandson #1!

NOTES FROM THE CATHOLIC WORKERS



Four M's goes to Wallyhouse

Wallyhouse was recently blessed by the presence of the 4M group on June 18...which happened to also be David's birthday. We had the pleasure to host the 4M group...which stands for Monks (David and Barbara), Meditation, Meal and Mahjong. And that is what we did. We began by gathering in the Wallyhouse chapel for a guided meditation—we imagined a bird in our hand. Do you know the saying, "a bird in hand..."? Refreshed, we moved to the dining area where we enjoyed an array of salads brought by those in attendance (see photo), the perfect lunch for a hot day. Which was followed by a yummy Baskin-Robbins ice cream cake. Well fed, we settled in to continue our learning of how to play Mahjong. We have some good laughs and great teachers (Gretchen and Jerek Jong) to help us recognize the Chinese symbols on the tiles, what to do with them and how to add up all of our well earned points.

The 4M group meets on the **3rd Monday of the month**. Our next meeting is **August 20**. Please come join in the prayer, food and fun!

Wallyhouse now has hours. We are open to serve the poor in our midst M-Sat 8am-12noon and M-F 2-4pm. If you have an hour or two or more to come during those hours to help answer the door, fold laundry or spend time in our new Artfelt, an open art studio for at-risk youth and the houseless, please do come and hang out with us.



Wallyhouse needs Volunteers!!!

If you are looking to volunteer and can give a few hours to serving our houseless community, Wallyhouse can use help with handing out food, doing laundry and answering the door to respond to the needs expressed. Any day is great, except Sunday. If interested contact David (805) 212-0237 or Barbara (805) 535-5677.



Our St Elizabeth Saints have been smoking up the Basketball courts with energy and verve! Thanks to **Nathan** for organizing this year's team, for **Joshua** for lending some coaching insights, and to our pal **Keith Burdette** for making sure our guys have terrific footwear, shorts and duffle bags!!!!

A church that does not provoke any crisis, preach a gospel that does not unsettle, proclaim a word of God that does not get under anyone's skin or a word of God that does not touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed: what kind of gospel is that?
- Archbishop Oscar Romero