

"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 2013

The Right Reverend
Robert L. Fitzpatrick
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

The Reverend
Melinda S. Padasdao,
Priest Associate

The Reverend Dr.
Gerald G. Gifford.
Rector Emeritus

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

Hsiao Ying "Ajaon" Chen
Choir Director

Marie Wang
Organist

Katherine Crosier
Parish Administrator
Editor and Layout
Music Consultant

Arleen Young
Senior Warden

David Kleinschmidt,
Junior Warden

Keith McCartney
Secretary / Clerk

Heather Manning
Treasurer

Website:
www.stelizabeth720.org

Email:
stelizabethhawaii@gmail.com

The Good Samaritan

The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector

If you've asked yourself "what does God expect of me?", today is your day. If you've wondered "am I doing what he wants?", today is your day. Too often we try to complicate it all. "Am I believing exactly the right thing?" "Have I followed the rules?" "Have I done the rituals properly?" We love to complicate what God has made so simple.

The prophet Micah said it: What does God require but that you love kindness and act justly and walk humbly with your God.

And that is the truth that Jesus picks up today, when he is face to face with (horror of horrors!) a lawyer who is also a priest! Some days, it seems, the readings just love to punch me in the nose!

As one of those lawyer/priests, I can tell you --- we love to do just what my brother lawyer/priest did. We love to test. We love to push. We love to poke. And most of all, we love to justify ourselves. And this lawyer/priest who confronts Jesus today continues that proud tradition!

The first question is a common one: "How am I saved?" Jesus doesn't answer. He turns the question back on the questioner, who give the right answer. "Love God with all that you are and love your neighbor as yourself. And Jesus tells him: "Yes, do that."

Except it's impossible to actually do that. None of them, none of us, love God with all that we are, nor do we love our neighbor that

way. And something deep inside that lawyer/priest knew it. He just knew it. So he asked the next question: "Who is my neighbor?"

Now, for those of you who are neither lawyers nor priests, this question has to be translated. It is a question asked in lawyer-speak. What he was really getting at was this: "Who's in?" and "Who's out?" "To what limited group of people must I extend myself?" And, "who can I safely ignore?" Those are questions we ask to this very day.

They are the same questions that are at the root of what divides Protestants and Catholics, Jews and Muslims, people of different races, genders and sexual orientation. "Who's in?" and "Who's out?"

So Jesus, the master storyteller, tells the lawyer/priest the story we all know so well. A man, we don't know his name, his character, or his history, gets mugged on the very dangerous road from Jerusalem down to Jericho. Some in the crowd likely thought he had it coming. No one in their right mind walked that route alone! It's like walking down Kalakaua Ave some Friday night at 2 a.m. You're asking for trouble!

He's left for dead. But wait! Here comes a priest! Help has arrived! Except, oops, nope, it hasn't. The priest walks on by. Next a Levite, the tribe who assists in Temple worship.

I want to share this story with you. A



Rector's Message, continued

theology professor some years back had all his students prepare a sermon on the

Good Samaritan. They did so. On their way to class that day, all of them ready to deliver their sermon, the professor had arranged for an actor to pretend he was bleeding and beaten, lying on the side of the college road where the students walked to class. All of the students had their sermons in hand. All of the students had to walk by the apparently injured man. Not one of them stopped.....Not one.

So how about that Levite who came upon the injured man in Jesus' story? Will he help? Nope.

In those days, stories were told in threes. And as Jesus was telling his story, the people listening probably expected a third passerby. And they likely expected him to be a regular Jewish person. And the moral of the story would be that a regular Jew did the right thing while the pious mucky mucks didn't. That's what the crowd was waiting for. That's what the crowd expected.

But there goes Jesus again, being Jesus, and totally blowing everyone's mind. I don't think we have a parallel today to get at the kick in the gut Jesus delivered when the third man turned out to be a Samaritan.

Maybe a radical Muslim extremist would come close. In the '50's, maybe a communist. In the 30's, maybe a Nazi. You see, the Jewish people loathed the Samaritans. And the Samaritans loathed the Jews right back. Only 20 years before Jesus told this story, a bunch of Samaritans dug up human bodies, tore the bones apart, and scattered those bones in the Holy of Holies in the Temple at Jerusalem. How's that?!

Jesus completes his story of three, and the third man to come by is the hated Samaritan. He gathers up the wounded man, tends to his injuries and leaves enough money with the Innkeeper for a stay of 24 days. The hated Samaritan is not only compassionate, he is kind and he is generous.

There's an old saying: "There are no stupid questions," but, I think that is true only when the person doing the asking is sincere in his asking. The lawyer/priest today was not sincere when he asked Jesus: "Who is my neighbor?" He was, instead, trying to justify himself. So Jesus treated his question as a stupid question.

He treated it as a stupid question by completely ignoring the question. Because when Jesus got done with his shocking story of the Samaritan, Jesus asked the priest/lawyer a very different question. Not "who is my neighbor", as if I could point out neighbors like so many rocks or trees or things, turning neighbors in objects. No. The question Jesus asked is: "Which of the three was neighbor to the injured man?"

In short, "to whom, my dear lawyer/priest, are you a neighbor?" "To whom are you a neighbor?"

Jesus is cajoling us today to open our eyes and see that our task is not to identify neighbors, but to be neighbors. It is a particular challenge to his clergy, who can get so wrapped up in the theory that we forget the practice. A lesson those seminary students probably never forgot.

The question Jesus asks is not: "Do you think the right things?" Instead, he asks, "will you do the right things?"

The answer will only be known when you and I come across the next person in need.

+amen

Fr. David will be on sabbatical from May 28 to September 1st.

For pastoral emergencies, please contact Mother Imelda Padasdao at 256-9277.

The Reckless Rector

If you'd like to keep up with Father David and find out what adventures he's having on his sabbatical, you can read his blog. Go onto the St. Elizabeth's website, www.stelizabeth720.org and click **The Reckless Rector** link on the home page.

Kenya Diary

The following are excerpts from Father David's blog: *The Reckless Rector*, www.therecklessrector.blogspot.com



In Kabula at last

Saturday, June 1, 2013, around 9:15 a.m.

I'm happy to report that as of this writing and many miles later, I sit in a wicker chair in the home of Bishop and Betty Lubanga on a warm, sunny morning in Kabula, Kenya. Children from the primary school are playing and shouting during recess. A rooster as big as a peacock started off the day, anticipating the sunrise by at least an hour.

The trip from there to here was, as it were, long, as well it should be. This is a far place.

Downtown Nairobi looks very much like lower Manhattan with its mix of crowds and 100 pound bags of potatoes and corn being delivered and traffic and dust and generally a whole bevy of folks, everyone in a hurry.

The bus ride from Nairobi to Bungoma was an adventure all of its own.

The roads are narrow and the drivers brave as trucks and busses and bikes and even a witch or two on a broom vie for traffic space,

honors for arriving first and a general sense of having been born for, but passed over by, alas, the Indy 500.

And yet, the Kenyan countryside is a marvelous blend of valleys and farms and lakes and rivers. Here and there wild stands of zebra look as mellow as farm cows, and then the gazelles a short distance off...It is Africa!

The tiny villages dot the landscape, most looking beyond desperately poor.

Wood that had lost its color decades ago holds together row after row of this butcher shop (featuring today's just slaughtered goat) the cell phone shack, the concrete store and an always ubiquitous Coca Cola stand....Far away from everything? Never too far for a Coke!

We arrived after nearly 9 hours of bussing purgatory in Bungoma, very near the Ugandan border (just 30 minutes up ahead, I'm told), in a rain that seemed to redefine rain. You've heard of cats and dogs rain and buckets of rain and driving rain – well, how about sky is falling rain? As if the sky was sliced in two by a magnificent carving knife allowing every drop of water stored from the moment of creation until 5 pm yesterday afternoon to pay a visit not simply to the earth, but to the 100 sq yards surrounding the wayfarers from Nairobi; 25 Nigerians and one Pole. (Funny how Joyce, the program director kind enough to meet me, had no trouble figuring out which bus rider was her charge!)

After quiet introductions, a welcome shower and a long night's sleep, today begins the month-long journey in this place I have visited by photo, now seeing in the flesh... The Bishop is soft spoken, kind, with a great passion for the poor he serves. His wife, mama Betty is simply a sweetheart who quietly works away, contributing from time

Kenya Diary, continued

to time to the conversation, but always working away. They look like a couple in their early 40's: who would guess they have 9 children and 4 grandchildren!



A Singing Sunday Sunday June 9, 2013

And what a Sunday!

The Mass began around 10:30 am and featured, in the tiny converted classroom, a local church choir of maybe 25 men and women – and boy can they sing!

I'll try to download some audio onto tis blog, but if cannot, when I get back I'll show you – particularly the gospel procession which had boisterous music, and 6 children dancing back and forth as the deacon carried the gospel book! Fantastic!

Just wait til we tweak OUR gospel procession, not to mention Francis and Harold shimmering up the aisle with the collection plate!

The Mass was followed by a local lunch of ugali and steamed kale and I believe an entire glass of unfiltered water (hoping not but suspecting so) and then an afternoon listening to the choir practice under the trained ear of Fr. Patrick, an Anglican priest and music director from the next town over.

A Story

Bishop Ruben 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 Nairobi to Kabula, 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, Ruben 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, Ruben 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 Ruben's son, were charged with keeping hawks at bay since the hawks often waited for the chicks to emerge -- breakfast. Ruben's boy had been too

*Beautiful kids
in a remote
village*



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.

The boy is now 34 years old, in his third year of university in Turin, Italy. Stories like these remind me that while God always heals, restoring those who surrender to peace -- sometimes there are also cures. Amen.

HIV/AIDS Class Monday June 17, 2013

Into Bungoma town, through the ever crowded streets, then into yet another skinny red dirt road, but this time just a few minutes, until we reached Peter's house and the community group of disabled persons who make up our HIV/AIDS class this week.

Some of the folks present have polio and some shriveled legs from birth and others wounded feet, an array of physical challenges that seem to make an already hard life in Kenya that much more difficult.

But, you wouldn't know it from the smiles, the laughter, the

participation and just plain joy as we sat under yet another tree and engaged folks who started out as strangers and ended up as friends.

The discussion about sexuality, blood transfers, men's and women's sexual secretions and talking with our youngsters

continued on page 6



Another best day

Kenya Diary, continued

Making furniture June 19, 2013

Okay, if you or I want to get some new furniture, it's simple.

Save your money, or better yet, wait for one of those "take it now pay us later" sales, and in a few days, your newly decorated living room is a reality.

As you may have guessed, things are slightly different here.

This morning as I was leaving for our day trip to the AIDS education program, there, in the compound, was a fellow up in a tall tree -- cutting 2 foot thick branches with a machete.

Cool.

But when we got back, OMG.

Several trees were down, about 50 1"x 6" boards piled up, and from those boards, the bishop will have new furniture made and will sell what's left to pay for the tree chopping and furniture making...

Amazing!

June 19 already, and the dawn is filled with crickets and roosters and some kind of insect that sounds like a Sammey squeak toy and a wild pig off in the distance and birds that sing like they've never seen a sunrise.

Africa seems most alive at dawn.

The pump for water is going strong,



as well about such things was lively and funny at times, then turning quite serious indeed.

AIDS kills here, and there wasn't a person present who hadn't lost several family members or friends to the disease.

This is a four-day seminar, with the hope that each of the 20 folks present will take what they learn to 5 more, as the word is slowly spreading about how to effectively prevent and/or treat this disease.

AIDS/HIV education is the first project started by Bishop Ruben in the late 1990s, when he began by pushing a wheelbarrow with TV, VCR and generator to villages for this education.

Remarkably, (or sadly, maybe not such a surprise), his superiors in the Anglican Church forbade him from continuing with these classes, reasoning that immorality caused AIDS so those who get it shall suffer the consequences...

Not terribly different from the attitude in the US during the 1980s, eh?

And Jesus weeps.

The night came with a torrent of rain -- it felt like living on the inside of a Rock 'n Roll drum for several hours last night as the skies seemed to be sliced open and water like a monsoon crashed to earth.

Fortunately I did my laundry and hung it on the line to dry -- it should be well rinsed!



Kenya Diary, cont.

someone began at 4 am and it will go on through the day.

Breakfast is waiting in the next room, instant coffee and maybe some Kenyan style malasadas, without the sugar coating, but just as good!

Then it's an early trek to the AIDS class since today is the last instruction day.

Yesterday, maybe 6 of the folks shared that they found the courage and the opportunity to talk with their children about this disease....

Today we will push to open conversations between spouses, a harder sell in this, and probably most, cultures.

The time here is growing short and I am already missing the kind people, the relaxed pace and the incredible beauty of this place.



"Mother, when I invited you to join us on our honeymoon, I meant on Facebook."

from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
©Harley L. Schwadron
Reprinted with permission

"For centuries people have talked about 'the patience of Job.' But nobody ever talks about the patience of the long-suffering Mrs. Job."
—Cal Samra



Sunday School Certificates

The last day of the Sunday School 2012-2013 school year was on May 26th. 33 students received their certificates, 2 received their certificates a week early and 3 received their certificates a week late! Our Sunday School has grown since that first Sunday in September at the start of the school year. The numbers do fluctuate, families have moved, other families have come..so now we are up to 43 and counting!

The children were called and received their certificates from Fr. David and then received a candy lei from the teachers. The teachers, **Jamie Chock, Lillian Tyau, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Doris Lam, Heather Manning, James Fitzpatrick, Seine Lino** and **Fane Lino** were also recognized for their tremendous help and guidance with the children throughout the school year! You will see some of the older children now helping in the church service, learning the role of acolyte this summer.

And to the congregation, thank you for your continued support of the children and the program. Special thanks to **Miss Ajaon** working with the children the 4th Sunday of each month teaching them music appreciation, voice and singing.

A Safe and Happy Summer to you all.

—Sue Yap

"Many persons have a wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose."

—Helen Keller

"Laughter is the beginning of prayer."

—Reinhold Niebuhr

July Acolyte Schedule

- 7/6: Nathan and Kevin
- 7/13: Joshua and Kama
- 7/20: Kevin and Nathan
- 7/27: Makai and Joshua



Happy Birthday
*God's blessings on those with
 July birthdays!*



Help! Your Pledge is Needed!

Today I am one of your senior members. I am 86 years of age. St. Elizabeth's has always been a home to me. My grandparents were members. My parents were married

at St. Elizabeth's on Christmas Day and my siblings were baptized here. I truly feel I belong, and regard members here as my church family.

As a church family I know we have a responsibility to support the goals found in our annual report and which are directed by our Vestry. The Vestry is the governing body of St. Elizabeth's.

I am living on a fixed income of social security, a state pension and some savings and am comfortable. But I feel that my obligation is to support the cost of housekeeping and the many community outreach activities and will increase my contribution.

Each of us was created in God's image, but we are not perfect. Yet we must strive to do the good deeds each day that Father David suggests.

One of the ways is to increase our monetary contributions. St. Elizabeth's is in a position to help the greater Kalihi-Palama community. This is the only way we can grow.

Our goal is to have each member of our church family pledge. Will you join me?

Christine Ling

'Prayer is a reference of earthly unease to a comforter beyond the earth, necessary to save hearts, and sanity, from cracking.

—Malcolm Muggeridge

Richard and Ronald Roke	7/3
Faith Chock	7/4
Alan Esaki	7/10
Richard Okubo	7/11
Carly Venenciano	7/12
Ruby Chock	7/12
Jeldan Romualdo	7/13
Kody Hayashi	7/15
Onlyone Helly	7/16
Mildred Kuniyoshi	7/17
Nathan Neeto	7/18
Lisa-Anne Chan	7/19
Tim Blaisdell	7/20
Frank Yap	7/20
Lynnsey Ho	7/21
Richard Yee	7/23
Barry Zane	7/24
Mary Ann Lentz	7/25
Jerek Jong	7/26
Jean Hirashiki	7/27
Lydia Joseoph	7/27
Fran Kramer	7/28
Jordan Rico	7/30



Attendance

Sunday, June 2	171
Wednesday, June 5	31
Sunday, June 9	141
Wednesday, June 12	18
Sunday, June 16	145
Wednesday, June 19	21
Sunday, June 26	*
Wednesday, June 29	*

* data not available at press time