

*"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 2014**

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## The Little Ones

*By The Rev. David J. Gierlach*

Last week, our gospel lesson ended with some words by Jesus that made at least a few folks here pretty upset.

You remember the words, about Jesus not bringing peace but actually causing division between children and parents, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, how we need to love Jesus more than those most intimately connected with us.

More than one person wondered how such language ever made it into the Bible, much less coming from the lips of Jesus.

I start there this morning because what Jesus may be getting at has everything to do with how we are to understand what it is to welcome others, and to be welcomed by others, which is our lesson for today.

Perhaps what Jesus is getting at in his harsh, two by four between the eyes observation about our family life is to help us keep relationships in perspective: meaning, we get in trouble when we ask any human relationship to bear too much weight, to bear the weight that only the ultimate, that only the divine, can carry.

I heard an interview the other day with a singer who had been given up at birth to adoptive parents, parents, who, it turned out, left a lot to be desired.

Dad was an active alcoholic and mom had her own serious issues.

This singer, a woman now 52 years old, was talking about her latest song which, she said, is all about finally learning the lesson

that romantic love isn't the answer to her deepest needs.

She says she's felt like a plug in search of a socket throughout her whole life, and for the longest time, kept trying to make romantic love, the love our popular music is enthralled with, the love that really describes, according to this singer, maybe the first 6 months of any relationship, maybe only the first 90 days — she kept trying to make that love the socket that will satisfy her need, her emptiness, to be the love that would save her.

Jesus, in his harsh words last week, is asking us to pay attention to what we seek from each other, because we none of us can be, completely, the socket for anyone's plug.

We are creatures made in the image and likeness of God, and our relationships with each other, if lived with an understanding of their limits, can be and often are deeply fulfilling, deeply enriching.

Yet, at the end of the day, we each of us has an even deeper longing, an even deeper need, an even deeper desire, that only the love of God can fill.

That perspective, I think, is what Jesus is getting at as he cautions us to keep our priorities straight, as he teaches us today about welcoming.

If we see our family and friends as the be all and end all of our relationships, we will welcome only them, and those who look like or talk like or act like them.

But if the true ground of our



# Rector's Message, continued

relationships is God, if God is the source of the love that flows through us and to each other, then all of a sudden a whole new world opens up before us.

Jesus peels away the veil that keeps us from seeing this new world by speaking of the little ones, little ones who, if given even a cup of cold water, have a great blessing to pass on.

And I have to ask, who are these little ones, these disciples, that Jesus is talking about this morning?

When I first read the passage, I figured he's talking about you and I and all Christians in the world who are doing the giving.

But then I began to wonder.

Jesus isn't focusing so much on the one giving the water as he is on the little one receiving the water - he's not zeroing in on the one doing the welcoming, but the little one who is welcomed.

We who are gathered here this morning are mostly the ones doing the giving; we here are the ones most often doing the welcoming.

And here's the question that kept nibbling at me all week long: what if we are not the little ones Jesus is talking about?

What if we are not the disciples he has in mind?

What if people with money and power and who are generally living the good life, a category most Episcopalians fall in, what if we aren't the little ones Jesus has in mind?

What if, instead, the little ones, the disciples Jesus is talking about, are the children from Honduras and Guatemala and El Salvador who are pouring over our borders in Texas?



*Children made crosses on the last day of Sunday School.*

What if the little ones, the disciples Jesus is talking about, are the refugees from Iraq and Syria?

What if the little ones, the disciples Jesus is talking about, are those in the world who are the most vulnerable, the most at risk, those camping out today in Kakaako Park or down the street sleeping in tents on the sidewalks?

And I wonder this because Jesus says if someone gives a glass of cold water to one of these little ones, they'll get a reward; which sounds very much like the final judgment as Matthew describes it, at the end of time, as all of humanity is divided into two groups, the sheep to one side and the goats to the other.

One group is praised for feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned; the other group is condemned for not doing those things.

And what's always baffled me about that story is why both sides, both the sheep and the goats, are surprised, because, both groups, in shock, ask Jesus when on earth did we see you naked or hungry or in jail?!

Why are they surprised?

There shouldn't be much of a mystery here; after all, isn't Christian discipleship all about reaching out to and taking care of those around us?

So why are both sides surprised?

You'd think both sides would see this coming.

I wonder if there is surprise maybe because those doing the giving and feeding and visiting are not necessarily the disciples of Jesus, if we define "disciple" as Jesus does: becoming like Jesus....

Maybe the true disciples of Jesus, God's emissaries to the rest of us, are the ones receiving the food, the drink, the prison visit.

And maybe it's a surprise to both groups,

# Rector's Message, continued

just as it might be a surprise to us, to realize that at some level, the true disciples of Jesus may not be those with much, but those with nothing, and if that's the case, then how we find our salvation may not be by seeing ourselves as good Christians who visit and feed and heal, (important as those things are) but perhaps by changing how we see those whom we welcome, particularly the dirty, the unkempt, the houseless, that guy who's belongings are stuffed in the shopping cart at the back of our church, that, rather than seeing ourselves as Christ's emissaries to them, perhaps we begin to see them as Christ's emissaries to us.

Perhaps it is then that we might see that our relationships, as Christians, cannot be defined or confined to blood or friendship or family, but rather that we are invited to move far beyond those limited arrangements — out into the whole wide world — where every single human being is honored as a being made in the image and likeness of God; where every human being, particularly the little ones, the true disciples of Christ, have a claim upon our time, our talent and our treasure.

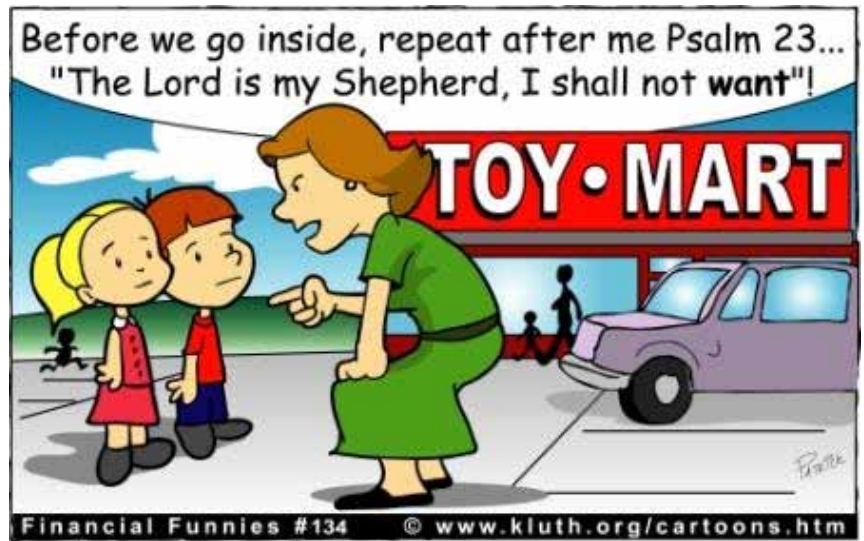
Perhaps.

+amen



## Baptism

On Sunday June 29 we welcomed through the sacrament of baptism two new members of the church, **Ashten Bugarin** and **Jefirston Nixon**. Nine month old Ashten is the son of **Glory Amigable** and **Carsten Bugarin** and Ashten's godparents are **Bryant Taeza** and **Krislyn Adaoag**. Three month old Jefirston is the son of **Cherviann Bossy** and **Saimon Sirauo**.



## Quotable Quote

*"Holiness is not a badge of achievement for a saint but is wrought in the life, in the very being, of an ordinary person by the will of the Word of God. Holiness, from the vantage of the person who may truthfully be said to be holy, is, in the most elementary meaning, the restoration of integrity and wholeness to a person."* --W. Stringfellow, *The Politics of Spirituality*, 41.

## A Note To Our Readers

To you dear ones who read this newsletter but can't worship with us, please keep in mind an occasional gift to **St. Elizabeth's PASTORAL FUND**. Every Tuesday at 8 am sharp, there are maybe 30 folks in desperate need of a few bucks to keep the lights on or the roof over head or some food on the table. A little bit of moolah goes a long way in making a HUGE difference in the lives of so many.

And as the wise man once said: **"Money is like manure —it's not worth a thing unless it's spread around...."**  
Many thanks and blessings! —Fr. David





*RED  
was the  
color  
of the day  
at  
Pentecost!*

## Pentecost

The celebration of Pentecost was a fine affair indeed, what with thousands of red balloons, birthday cakes and streamers, but best of all were our special friends **Mother Jodene and Kit Hawkins** back here at their old stomping grounds! The whole congregation was delighted to see them again. The Pentecost Brunch in Shim Hall was *supercalifragalisticexpialadotions!* Many thanks to the many hands who made this a wonderful and holy celebration of God's gift to us of the Holy Spirit!





## March for Medical Mercy III

The **THIRD** monthly **March For Medical Mercy** headed out on Thursday, June 26 with nearly a hundred in attendance. We are asking Congress to please, please, *pretty please with sugar on top*, fix the law that bans people from Micronesia from receiving Medicaid benefits, ‘cause without Medicaid, many who need dialysis won’t get it, and those who need radiation for cancer won’t get it. Please come along next month as this vital health care issue takes us once again to the streets — **Thursday, July 31** leaving St. E’s at 10 am!



All photos on this page courtesy of Ann Hansen.

*“[One] must read the Scriptures as though they were something entirely unfamiliar, as though they had not been set before him ready-made, as though he has not been confronted all his life with sham concepts and sham statements which cited the Bible as their authority.”*

Martin Buber, *On the Bible*, 5.



## Attendance

Sunday, June 1	191
Wednesday, June 4	18
Sunday, June 8	180
Wednesday, June 11	21
Sunday, June 15	160
Wednesday, June 18	16
Sunday, June 22	176
Wednesday, June 25	22
Sunday, June 29	191

# Confirmation at St. Peter's



Please give a kiss on the cheek and a punch in the arm as you congratulate our many youngsters who were confirmed by Bishop Bob on June 22 at St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Great job to **Simion Singueo, Saimon Singueo, Kevin Espin, Kesfin Esa, Jersey Rukuop, Alex Teiti-Gierlach, Inoleen Eichy, Neitan Neeto** and **Simo Singueo!!** Confirmation is our "yes" as teenagers to the promises made on our behalf at baptism and an adult commitment to stay involved in this Episcopal community!

## Oh, oh Spaghetti-O



Don't forget to remember the LAST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH our superb Spaghetti Dinner and Dance Nite, featuring this month *deeeelicious* Kalua pig and cabbage, Lau Lau and lots of other mouth watering treats!

Mark **July 25th** down — it's a cheap date with lots of cool cats!





Photo from last year's Hunger Walk.

## 10th Annual Hunger Walk

Once again, the yutes of St. E's will participate in the **September 13 Hunger Walk** to raise funds for the Hawaii Foodbank. St. E's has been greatly blessed BY the Foodbank with a \$2000 grant earlier this year which effectively replaced half of our Food Pantry budget for the year! And, we've been told through the grapevine that another grant is on its way for later this year! Happily, with the near heroic stamina and good humor of **Charlie Kokobun** and his trusty sidekick **Harlan Arakawa**, we have been able to provide hundreds of food bags and hot meals as well as desirable frozen meats and fresh veggies to those in need in our community. Way to go, guys!

## Go, Saints!

Our Varsity and JV teams are smokin' up the competition, under the careful eye of head coach **Joshua Yuen-Schat** and assistant **Viliani Lino**, these boys are doing a *fantabulous* job what with graceful teamwork, selfless sharing and super smart decision making. They are right at the top of the standings of our venerable Palama League Night Basketball!



## CALLING ALL ALTAR GUILD WANNABES

Admit it, there's plenty of times you've been sitting there at your kitchen table thinking, "My life will not be complete until I do a year on the Altar Guild." Well, lucky man, woman and /or child, now is your chance! Please see Fr. David or **Collette Arakawa** and they will get you signed up and signed on in no time flat!

*"People don't, on their own, in their immaturity, see themselves clearly. But if they practice love, they will someday look into a mirror and see not only themselves but God. They will have the answer to the riddle and understand."*

S. Rudin, Paul *Among the People*, 186.





## Community Drop-In Center

Many thanks to our pals Pius and Jojo, both leaders in the Micronesian community, for volunteering time to serve as drop-in hosts at Shim Hall to provide information about housing, medical, legal and immigration needs for this community. The drop-in hours are from around 10 am-3 pm daily and all are welcomed to come by, have a cup o joe, talk story and enjoy.

## Free Cell Phones



One of the benefits our federal government is helping with is FREE PHONES to those who meet certain income requirements. For a couple of months now, St. E's has hosted a FREE PHONE site that is run by Cecilia and husband Ray and their large family of 13! Lots of folks have come by, and in the coming by have become acquainted with St. Elizabeth's.

# How does our garden grow?

Here, surrounded by what can only be described as the Godzilla of lettuce harvests, stand our dear **Ignacia Terno** and her sidekick **Nana**. The lettuce was divvied up and given away at our Sunday Morning Farmer's Market with the VERY BEST PRICES IN TOWN! **FREE!**



The HCAP staff takes the students out into the garden for lessons on sustainability.