

"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

June 2015

The Right Reverend
Robert L. Fitzpatrick
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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Born Again

by The Rev. David J. Gierlach

Well, it's Trinity Sunday today, the feast day that celebrates the mind boggling understanding that one God is expressed in three persons, yet remaining one God!

It's the day when smart priests take a vacation day and ask one of the junior clergy to do the preaching!

Clearly, you don't have a smart priest....

Just last Monday, I was at the Oahu cemetery, where I have spent the last several Memorial days with British Naval officers, some Episcopalian friends and a fellow playing bagpipes as we pray for the honored dead from America, The United Kingdom, and the British commonwealth.

While we were standing around waiting for the bagpipe man to show up, the wife of the British officer mentioned that she is half Irish, which brought me to mention that the Irish had just, quite surprisingly to many, overwhelmingly approved a national referendum approving same sex marriage.

Surprising for many because Ireland is probably the most Roman Catholic nation on earth and has a reputation for being rather conservative on such matters.

But what surprised me is when the captain's wife said this:

"It wasn't a result based on religion, it was a result based on equal rights."

Which struck me as an understandable but sad comment on the shape of religion these days.

What she meant, she later explained, was that the "rules" and "regulations" and "right thinking" that we often define as religion got trumped by people's insistence that committed, loving relationships aren't confined to opposite sex couples, and that fact needs to be not only

recognized but honored.

She wasn't thinking that religion embraces exactly this too: that God loves all of us, that all are welcome in the Kingdom, that faith is far more than the rules and the regs.

And it seems to me that this is the dilemma that old Nicodemus finds himself in today....

He's a top Pharisee, the guys who excell on knowing and following the rules and regs, and he's completely dumbfounded by Jesus - who's so far removed from a rules and regs idea of faith that he and Nicodemus aren't talking the same language.

He's curious about Jesus.

After all, the stories about changing all that water into wine, healing the fellow born blind, telling the lame man to walk, it's all making the 5 o'clock news.

Then there was that mess just a few days ago, what with Jesus storming the Temple and tossing out all the pay day lenders and pawn shop owners and their ilk.

Caused quite a stir....

So here's Nicodemus, an honorable and sincere man, who is dumbfounded when Jesus tells him, in so many words, that — as we are, we cannot encounter God.

It's a tough thing to swallow, so I'll say it again.

As we are, we cannot encounter God.

It's not only Jesus saying it.

Isaiah and Paul say it too.

Something has to change — a hot coal, says Isaiah; exchanging flesh for an invasion of the spirit, says Paul; a new birth, says Jesus.



Rector's Message, continued

And there's something else that's a shocker for we "pull up yer bootstraps," "earn your way home," "every man for himself" mentality that is the water we drink and the air we breathe — that hot coal, that invasion of the spirit, that new birth, these aren't things we do, these are things that are done to us!

Which is particularly true when it comes to birth.

The one being born isn't doing much — it's the one giving birth whose doing all the work, at least from what I can see.

Now, I've never given birth, and I completely agree with those who say that if men had the babies, the human race would have died out immediately.

But I've been around a fair number of births, and what I can tell you from the outside looking in is that there's not a lot of refined behavior going on.

Rules and regulations don't seem to rule the day, at least not for the mom in labor.

Instead, it seems. from the outside looking in, a glorious agony of sweat and tears and bodily fluids and pain and effort and well, many of you sitting here know it from being there, and you don't need to hear more from me.

But here's the point.

We so often think of God as that old white man with a flowing beard, sitting on a cloud, all wrapped up in rules and regulations, taking note of every foible and mess up you or I commit.

But Jesus is telling us that God is not at all like that.

Jesus insists that God is like a woman in labor; laboring to give birth to us: human beings who are struggling to emerge into that which we were always intended to become.

This idea of God giving birth to us isn't new with Jesus, it's all over the Bible; it's just that when we get all dressed up in our Sunday best, many folks would rather hear about the rules rather than risk getting soaked in the backwash of the Holy Spirit.

So how might all of this inform our faith?

How might it change how we think when we think of religion?

There's a Hebrew word for "womb" that is also used to speak of God's compassion, forgiveness and kindness.

Imagine that God is, every moment of every day, birthing all of humanity from a place of compassion, forgiveness and kindness, and that God has been doing this ever since humanity first stepped foot out of the trees of Africa!

What a take on God, eh?

How different from some stoic old man sitting outside of time and

unmoved by our problems.

There's another Hebrew word for "pain in childbearing" — it gets translated into English as "grieve."

Which is what God does when our first parents, Adam and Eve, leave the garden, having decided they are equipped to know the difference between good and evil all by themselves — it's what God does when the Jewish people, when we, put faith in machines of war and military alliances — rather than in the steadfast love of God.

God grieves....., God labors for us. Debbie Blue, *Sensual Orthodoxy*, 35-8, paraphrased.

So maybe what Jesus is saying to Nicodemus is that unless you're willing to be turned inside out; unless you will throw caution to the winds and slide down the slippery hill of God's boundless desire to have us all, unless you chuck everything you thought you knew about God, and look for God in the healing, compassionate, welcoming, inclusive, rowdy, soul stirring face of Jesus, who is our best window into the mystery that we call God, then you too, like Nicodemus, might just miss all the fun.

And maybe that's why the early church mothers and fathers give us this strange notion that one God is three, that three are one.....

What is the sound of one hand clapping?

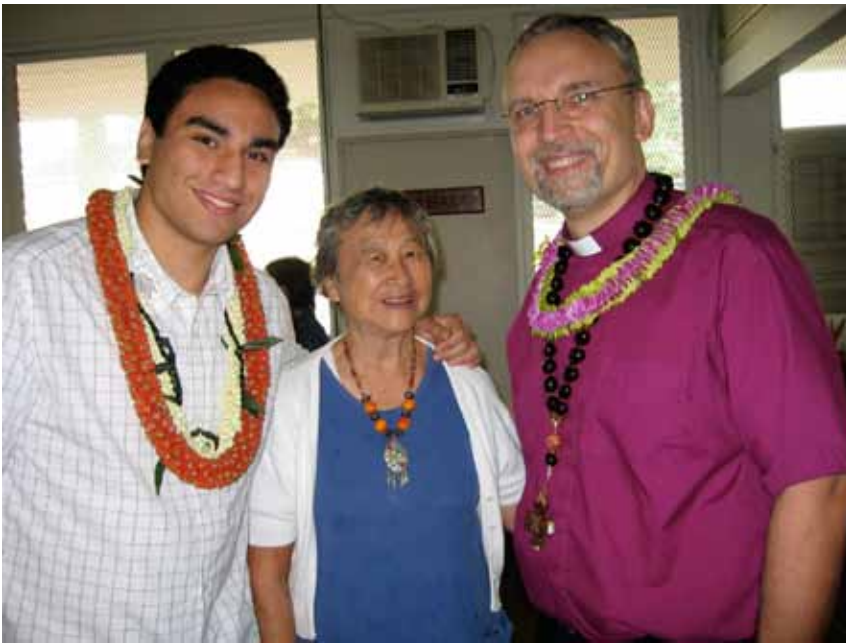
How do you find your life by losing it?

How are three one?

Maybe we are not meant to "get it" as much as we are meant to wrestle with it and surrender to it all at the same time--and in the struggle, in the surrender, is it then we might glimpse the face of God?

+amen

Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.



James Fitzpatrick (left) is shown with the late Christine Ling and his father, Bishop Bob Fitzpatrick.

A Letter from James Fitzpatrick

Aloha,

I am James Fitzpatrick. I am a member of St. Elizabeth's Church, Honolulu. I have been accepted into the Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) of the Episcopal Church. The Young Adult Service Corps is a ministry for those interested in exploring their faith in new ways by living and serving in communities around the Anglican Communion. YASC offers young adults a unique opportunity to be an active part of what God is doing in the world. Also, YASC videos are available at www.episcopalchurch.org/yasc and the video about Episcopal Volunteers in Mission is available at www.episcopalchurch.org/missionaries.

My preliminary assignment is in Panama. I will be working with youth outreach at two different locations, one at The Transfiguration in El Empalme, and the other at San Miguel Arcangel in Guabito. I will also be working with a program called Nutre Hogar, a community program that helps under-nourished children return to health.

While each YASCer is sent to a different location, and each serves in different capacities, we are all asked to raise at least \$10,000 of the roughly \$24,000 it takes to send one YASCer abroad for a year of service.

I need the help of my fellow Episcopalians in Hawai'i, our congregations and clergy to raise the needed funds. Can you please help?

I can speak to your congregation or a church group if that can help raise the needed funds. I would be more than happy to explain what YASC is and answer any questions your congregation might have. I would also explain the community work that I have done here in Hawai'i, and how those experiences will help me with any challenges I will face while serving the Church abroad. While serving with YASC, I will also be keeping a blog of my experiences, where everyone can follow the work that I will be doing and see what they are supporting.

At the suggestion of the YASC, my funds for my mission are being collected through my home Parish and will then be sent to the Episcopal Church Center.

Donations can be sent to the following:

St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
720 N. King St.
Honolulu, HI 96817-5791

Or payments can be made through the Parish website at <http://stelizabeth720.org/wordpress/donate-now/> and scroll down down to the "James Fitzpatrick Mission into the Young Adult Service Corps (YASC) in Panama" donation button.

Mahalo,

James Fitzpatrick
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Phone: 808-232-6350



Episcopal
Service Corps

Pentecost 2015: What a Festive Day!



Pentecost celebrates God's gift of the Holy Spirit, a Spirit that pushes us to meet people we would rather not meet, to touch situations we would rather step around, and to discover in the most unlikely of places the smiling face of a loving God who stops at nothing to help us surrender what we think we want in order to give us, freely and without cost, what we really need.....

...well, there is a cost....., but Jesus ponied up for one and all.



“Christians are usually sincere and well-intentioned people until you get to any real issues of ego, control power, money, pleasure, and security. Then they tend to be pretty much like everybody else. We are often given a bogus version of the Gospel, some fast-food religion, without any deep transformation of the self; and the result has been the spiritual disaster of “Christian” countries that tend to be as consumer-oriented, proud, warlike, racist, class conscious, and addictive as everybody else-and often more so, I’m afraid.”

- Richard Rohr, *Breathing Underwater*



Sunday School News

On May 24th the Sunday School held their annual recognition of the 54 children who have participated in the program this school year. They were presented certificates and a candy lei for their participation. **Mrs. Doris Lam** set up a bulletin board to exhibit some of the children's accomplishments.

Thank you to our teachers and helpers, **Jamie Chock, Lillian Tyau, Sarah Kleindschmidt, Heather Manning, David Kaloi, Seine Lino, Viliami Lino, Fane Lino, Sue Yap** along with student helpers **Megumi** and **Joey Gierlach**. Also want to thank **Miss Ajaon** for the wonderful music program she prepares with the children to sing the offertory hymn once a month.

On Trinity Sunday, the acolytes were recognized (top photo). **Preston Lentz** has trained 22 of our young people and children who are actively serving as acolytes, and some moving up to proudly serve as crucifers! You will see these children during the summer!

The Sunday School is on recess till August. There will be a music program during the Sunday service time, notice of that class will be forthcoming.



The Sunday School children received certificates on May 24.

New Candlesticks!



Thank you to **Glenn Woo** for his generous donation of a new Paschal Candle holder and new brass candlesticks which now flank the altar.



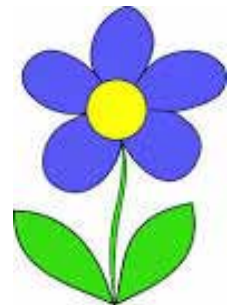
"Four days? Boy, time sure flies when you're dead!"

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It's BAAAAACK !



The container home is back with us until the end of July or so. It has finished making its rounds to various churches and because the new sit-lie laws have pushed folks out of Waikiki and Chinatown, our very own lovely downtown Palama is the new gathering place for many of our brothers and sisters without houses. We shall use the container home as emergency shelter for those in need.



Many thanks to FACE for allowing us this use for the summer months!



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"You're in a rut, Reverend. Every time I come here, you preach about the Resurrection."

Youth News

by Viliami Lino

Summer is finally upon us, families packing for vacations, graduates for graduation and St Elizabeth youth practicing for yet another season of basketball. While Coach **Joshua Yuen-Schat** was in school finishing his first year in college, **Daniel Yuen-Schat** stepped in to train our boys. With Daniel's help, the boys are warmed up and ready; however we would all appreciate your prayers for a injury-free and fun season! The season starts on June 8th and tournaments will be every Monday in the evenings, about 5pm - 10:30pm. GO ST. E's!

As you all know, Hui Pu (the best camp experience our youth ever had) will be the last one coordinated by **Sarah Klitzke**. Our youth here in St Elizabeth especially our boys and myself have been truly blessed to have worked, played and made memories with Sarah and the Klitzke 'ohana. They touched lives and formed everlasting family ties with our Tongan and Chuukese youths and we know that this streak will continue wherever they may be. To them we bid 'A hui hou' with all our prayers and love for a smooth and joyful transition and a big *Mahalo Nui Loa* for everything!!

Last summer, youth in the community familiar with St. Elizabeth participated in what we like to call "Fitness N Fellowship" and "Devocean," basically the youth under the supervision of **Anaseini Lino, Loke Teurikan** and myself would sleep over doing devotions and fellowshiping awaiting a sunrise



Our basketball boys say a prayer after a game last season.

hike. "Devocean" would be the very same, fellowship followed by a trip to the beach. The youth that participated were mostly Pacific Islander Ministry (PIM) youth from the two Tongan congregations under **Samate Ikavuka** and **Viliami Langi**. This year they would like to extend the invitation to anyone who is interested!



Life Lessons

"From the time we are born, we learn a lot of things, not only from our parents but the school, the church, our friends, the radio

that it's better to be rich than poor
that it's better to be white than brown
that it's better to be brown than black
that it's better to be young than old
that it's better to be christian than muslim
that it's better to be straight than gay
that it's better to be tall than short
that it's better to be thin than fat
that it's better to be good looking than ugly
that it's better to be a man than a woman

NONE OF THESE THINGS ARE TRUE
but sometimes it takes us a lifetime to find that out."

A Filipino Wise Man

Attendance

Sunday, May 3, Eucharists & Vespers	211
Wednesday, May 6, Eucharist	19
Sunday, May 10, Eucharists & Vespers	221
Wednesday, May 13, Eucharist	17
Sunday, May 17, Eucharists & Vespers	217
Wednesday, May 20, Eucharist	20
Sunday, May 24, Eucharists & Vespers	209
Wednesday, May 27, Eucharist	36
Sunday, May 31, Eucharists & Vespers	196



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with June birthdays!

Jerry Goo, Kerty Esisok	6/1
Sanson Kom, Caleb Ramelb	6/2
Daniel Lai, Elipha Sorcey	6/3
Wallace Tyau, Caridad Badua	6/4
Noah Blaisdell, Molisi Toli	6/5
Julie Eis	6/7
William Blaisdell, Alex Gierlach,	
Kelvin Padasdao, Linda Venenciano,	
Pearl Kau, Margarita Suyat,	
Glenn Woo, Gelsey Pulusou	6/8
Tracy Blaisdell, Allen Chan, Lori Ho	6/9
Carl Eis	6/10
Charles Kokubun, Bless Salvator	6/11
Jodene Hawkins	6/12
Kacy Hayashi	6/14
Sharon Sunagawa, Maria Bonilla	6/15
Joan (Lani) Kealoha	6/16
Steve Costa, Lani Kaaihue,	
Tucker Marlow, Alan Ramos,	
Estella Iwerks, Ignacia Terno	6/17
Kenneth Fujishige	6/18
Nakayama Michael	6/19
Lawrence Young, Ancheny Kom,	
Madson Michael, Juden Bonilla	6/20
Caroline Anderson, Stephen Chun	6/22
Faith Pangelina	6/23
Tyiana White	6/24
Mason Starkman	6/25
Imenta Helly	6/26

Ordination of a Deacon

and Reception of a Priest will take place at St. Elizabeth's on **Sunday, June 14th at 4:00 pm.** Viliami Langi will soon be known as **The Reverend Viliami Langi**, Permanent Deacon in the Episcopal Church.

We will also receive **Raymond Woo** who has been called to exercise his priestly ministry in the Episcopal Church.



A fantastic reception will follow the service! All are welcome.

Written in the Stars



Written in the Stars is a beautiful anthology of stories and sharing by many in our Micronesian community and by those of us who have gotten to know them these last many years.

This wonderful book was put together through the efforts of the Na Hokulele project that we hosted for three years here at St. E's. We have a bunch of books that we are giving away. What a wonderful way to enter into the lives and culture of fellow human beings!

Here's one of the authors, **Shellianne** who at the ripe old age of 7 is a published writer!

