

*"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 2017**

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## The Way

*The Rev. David J. Gierlach*

"I see the heavens open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him."

Such is the story of Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who, in his vision of what is truly real, in his invitation to his friends and neighbors to glimpse what is truly real, is met with stones flying and ears intentionally plugged up — it is our embrace of the world as we want it to be rather than accepting the free gift of the world as God knows it to be...

Don't blame the folks who are stoning Stephen this morning.

Isn't this how most folks react to this weird faith that Jesus calls us to?

Covering ears so as not to hear, ....., what?

Things ..... disturbing things ..... like this:

"But I say to you, love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you!

(Like the Taliban and Iran and Trump or Obama!)

Lend without expectation of return.

(Even to that bum on the corner, even to your no good brother-in-law!)

Be merciful, as God is merciful!

(Even to that crazy ex-girlfriend, boyfriend, husband or wife!)

Give to anyone who asks!

(Even if you gave something to her yesterday!)

Do to others as you would have them do to you!"

(As one friend candidly acknowledged, it's so easy to ask for forgiveness, so hard to give it...)

We live in times when a great many are worried about declining church membership, about the seeming lost voice of the church in community life, and about changes happening throughout our many cultures.

One fellow talks about a great retreat among orthodox Christians, back to the monasteries of the Middle Ages, to somehow preserve the faith from the onslaught of modern culture, from the changing attitudes about power and gender and race and class.

But it seems to me that what these fears are actually about is not Christianity but Christendom.

Huh????

It's this:

Christianity is all about selfless service, self sacrificing love, a refusal to judge one another, a life lived in the amazing freedom of the Holy Spirit to move and act as she wishes, sometimes upending our cherished traditions, usually forcing us out of our comfortable places and into the dynamic and challenging places of love and reconciliation.

We follow a savior who is, in Merton's words, "A vagrant, a destitute wanderer with dusty feet... who finds his way down a new road.

A homeless God, lost in the night, without papers, without identification, without even a number, a frail expendable



# Rector's Message, continued

exile who lies down in desolation under the sweet stars of the world and entrusts Himself to sleep...”T. Merton, Hagia Sophia.

In the heart of this vulnerable God, true Christianity is born.

But Christendom is something else entirely.

It is the joining of the church and the state, if not formally, then by each blessing the other.

Christendom happens when the wildly radical demands of the gospel are brought to heel, when faith becomes mere religion, when the uncompromising love for all is reduced to love of the immediate family; when God and country becomes the rallying cry; where enemies are everywhere and they are hated, not loved.

Christendom is focused on rules and order and hierarchy and power and money and the status quo.

As Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, Christendom happens “when religious leaders conflate God’s will with an existing social order, even one blatantly unjust, virulently racist, and impulsively violent.” MLK, Letter From Birmingham Jail.

We have lived most of our lives, indeed, for many centuries, under the boot of Christendom, and it is Christendom that is dying today, thanks be to God!

And for the first time in a very long while, we are at long last free to ask yet again, what does it mean to be a Christian?

Peter tells us in no uncertain terms:

You are a chosen race!

a royal priesthood!

a holy nation!

God’s own people!

In order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light!

Once you were not a people,

but now you are God’s people;

once you had not received mercy,

but now you have received mercy.

Meaning what?

Meaning that we are resident aliens in this life, the advance guard of the Kingdom of God.

Meaning that the “real Christian seeks the transformation of all the earth that is not of God’s will.

The real Christian no longer belongs — heart, soul, mind and strength — to an identity defined by tribe, nation, class, gender or ideology.

The real Christian no longer builds a fortress around family, clan, culture or language.

We have a new name — our old identity is now stripped away.

Real Christians offer no pinch of incense to emperors, they sing no national anthems, they bow only to the cross and sing only the hymns of the citizens of the kingdom of God.” Commins, *If Only We Could See*, 46-7. paraphrased.

The difference between Christianity and Christendom is revealed in a conversation between St. Francis of Assisi and Pope Innocent III as the Pope is showing the Saint around the grand palaces, full of gold and jewels and fine linens, in what is now called the Vatican.

The pope says to Francis:

“It is the same Church, but we can no longer say with the apostle Peter: ‘Gold and silver I have not,’ to which Francis answers, ‘Nor do you have the power to say, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, stand up and walk!””

The power of God exchanged for the power of gold, that’s what Christendom does to Christianity...

Which brings us to our gospel this morning.

Jesus says, “Do not let your hearts be troubled.

Believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.

If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

And you know the way to the place where I am going.”

Thomas says to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going.

How can we know the way?"

Jesus says to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you know me, you will know my Father also.

From now on you do know him and have seen him.

The Father and I are one."

Christendom takes these words of Jesus and uses them as a club to threaten all those who are not card carrying members of the club.

But Christianity knows that Jesus isn't asking for a salute, he's inviting us into a way of living that's rooted in compassion and mercy and humble service, rooted in a desire for peace, a life committed to righting the many wrongs we commit against one another, individually yes, but even more so, collectively, through unjust structures that create vast economic chasms between rich and poor.

This is the way, the truth, and the life — and everyone who embarks on this journey, no matter by what name she calls herself, is on the path to the kingdom.

On this path, we begin to sense the "slipperiness, the fluidity, between heaven and earth." Cummins, id. at 48.

We begin to marvel at "an unspeakable secret: paradise is all around us — and we do not understand." Merton, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander.

And so my friends, "like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk...

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood!

+amen

## Renovations at St. E's

Our beloved 100 year old cross was transplanted from its century long home to the front of the Narthex as the Kalihi Palama expansion continues. Many thanks to Dr Kintu and KPHC for graciously covering the full cost of this removal and relocation! As the work was being done, a very elderly Chinese man, with long wispy hair forming a beard down his chin, said that as a child he attended school here and the children prayed at this cross on a regular basis. He was so happy to see it preserved!



## Happy Birthday

*God's blessings on those with May birthdays!*



Richard Haller	May 2
Jennie Pang	May 3
Taylor Venenciano	
Rev. Gerald Gifford	May 4
Mermi Dereas	
Leslie Mitsuka	May 5
Kalisi Lavulavu	May 7
Michelle Lum	
Preston Lentz	May 8
Katherine Roke	
Jessie Hayashi	May 10
Margie Leong	
Felicidad Bueno	May 12
Inoleen Eichy	May 13
Liesl Eng	May 14
Rowena Blaisdell	May 15
Iwickson Este	
Chase Pacupac	May 18
Delia Martin	
Shirley Lau	May 22
Joseph Tolentino	May 24
Ruby Au	
Susana Baldonado	May 25
May Wai Hin Chock	May 26
Helen Tom	
Dwight Kokubun	
Greg Smith	
Marjory Tyau	May 28
Dorothy Jung	May 31
Jayden Shiroma	

# The Reckless Rector in Kenya

By Rev. David Gierlach

As you know, 4 years ago I got to spend time with three different community groups, one raising watermelon, one bees and a third chickens. We, the community of St. Elizabeth's, also helped with some modest funds over the last few years. What a joy to report that each of these groups has made truly amazing use of the modest funds we have given! The watermelon growers have raised and sold over 3000 watermelons in three seasons and are now branching into corn growing. The bee keepers (who didn't even have a bee keeper outfit before [think of harvesting honey from a bee hive in your gym shorts!]) and who had 5 beehives, have produced over 50 gallons of honey and now have 21 beehives, all diligently cranking out sweet, clear honey. The chicken growers, all young women in their 20's and early 30's, have gone from 10 chickens to several generations of 500+ birds that are grown, eggs harvested, then sold at a profit.



*On Saturday May 20 someone you know joined a Kenyan priest and lay leader for a series of home pastoral visits. Unlike Honolulu, in which home visits usually involve a lot of driving, as you can see, that is not a problem here! Five families were visited during this 2+ hour trek!*



*Speaking of pastoral, this looks like the very definition! Cows, mud brick homes and smoke to keep the malaria mosquitoes away!*



*A lunch feast with community organizer **Mama Joyce**, husband **George** and friends... yummy chicken (it had been running around the yard earlier in the day), corn tortilla and some tilapia. Who thought you'd need a diet after returning from Africa?!*

These grateful entrepreneurs are not only tripling or quadrupling the initial sums, and using them to in turn grow larger crops, more honey and many more chickens: They are using some of the excess cash from the sale of their goods to pay necessary school fees for their children, and are reaching outside of their own groups, paying the various school fees for a large number of orphans in the area. Each of the groups has money in the bank as seed money for the next project. Many thanks to all of you!!!! In the meantime, I'll send updates on the \$4500 you generously gave this time around. During my time here, we will meet on several occasions with the three original groups plus two others and they will tell us what their needs are and how they might use \$900 each to meet these needs. **Mama Joyce**, the community organizer, mentors each group and provided to me a painstakingly accurate breakdown of how much each group has received from us, what expenses were incurred, what gross income was received, and how the profit was used, right down to the last shilling (penny)!!!

A hui hou!!

## Africa Awakens

The cock crows hours before dawn  
Urging the sun to hurry along  
And bring at last the light of day,  
And Africa awakens.

The water pump squeaks  
It's urgent noise  
Gushing the first vital  
Drops of liquid that  
Quenches thirst and washes  
Clothes,  
And Africa awakens.

The school children  
Inch open tired eyes  
From thatch roofed mud made  
Homes,  
Finding turquoise uniforms  
And old black shoes  
As another school day begins  
And Africa awakens.

The daily headline screams  
Of crooked pols stealing  
And grabbing and gorging  
On the people's monies,  
A shameless high court  
Finds solace in blind eyes  
And avoided justice,  
As Africa awakens.

Across this lush yet tortured  
Land,  
Green and black under the  
Bluest skies, this cradle of  
Us all, our home of first and  
last  
Resort,  
One can see and touch  
The majesty, and the  
Misery  
Of man,  
As Africa awakens.

djg



*Enjoying fresh avocado and corn tortillas at the home of Julius and Beatrice, the leaders of the watermelon project!*



*Here's a typical Kenyan home, made of mud and cow dung, they can last up to 20 years!*

## Support Our Youth and Get A Clean Car!

St. E's will continue our Summer Car Wash Series to help offset the costs of these wonderful opportunities listed below. PRE-SALE Car Wash tickets will be sold on Sundays. **They will be \$10 per ticket, you can also visit us and bring a car or a friends car between 9am - 2pm every Saturday.** So far \$280 have been raised from car washes and recycling in the last 2 Saturdays. Every penny counts from the car washes, recyclables as well as donations. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP so far....we hope you all will be able to join us the next few Saturdays.

**Hui Pu** is an island wide Episcopal Diocese camp out of Camp Mokuleia. For ages 9–18, this camp will focus on **S.W.A.G.**: Saved With Amazing Grace. Hike, swim, and have a great time while learning about God's love and grace!

The **Episcopal Youth Event** (EYE17) is happening THIS YEAR in Oklahoma! This event only happens once every three years, and we are excited to be sending many of our youth. EYE17 is set to welcome more than 1,300 participants, workshop leaders, speakers, and volunteers to the campus of the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond from July 10-14.

Our very own **Seini Lino** is traveling with our very own **Mother Jodene** to the Holy Land this September and for those who are able, a check to St Elizabeth's, with the memo section noting "**Jerusalem Fund**" will help our young superstar experience her many years of Biblical studies first hand!! Seini currently works at Camp Mokuleia, she is always wearing a smile, devotes all her energy to serving others, and probably more than most, will grow deeply as a result of this trip.

Thanks for whatever help YOU can provide!

# A Message from the Youth Coordinator

By **Melanie Langi**

Hello June, farewell May. Can you believe that it's already the end of the school year? Mothers everywhere are smiling with glee! At least I am. No more getting up to take kids to school. However a mother never has a summer break. I need to rend myself to things with a joyful heart.

I would like to congratulate all who have been promoted to the next grade level and to all who completed and graduated from high school. Every day in May is Lei Day in Hawaii. I know all gradates recieved tons and tons of Lei from family and friends. Well deserved for all the hard work, sweat and tears it took to accomplish this milestone, ending one chapter and beginning a new and exciting chapter in their lives. Here is a little encouragement for the graduates: "Be confident in who you are, no matter what the proceeds look or feel like, break every barrier that stands in your path, and always remain rooted in God's pure and perfect love". ConGRADulations to all Class of 2017 Graduates!

I know we planned to open the youth center in May, but some projects were pushed back. However the youth center is certain to be up and running this month (June) fo' shua!

Tutoring program is planned to continue for those who attend summer school and who may need asistance with homework. Volunteers are still encouraged. The youth are also asking for donations for the youth center. If you have furniture you don't use, we are looking for love seats, and also if you have computers or laptops, student would greatly benefit from those as many do not have access to these items at their home. Anything of worth will be greatly appreciated.

Lastly, TEENS! If you're not doing anything on Friday nights, we highly encourage and invite you to our Friday night bible studies. Come share the Good Word, make new friends and fellowship with us. Let's learn God's amazing truth together! Join us 8pm every Friday. Hope to see you soon!

Aloha,  
Melanie Langi

"I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."  
Philippians 1:6

Mahalo to the **Chock Family** for these wonderful pictures!



**Jamie Chock, Melanie Langi,** and happy helpers with their dyed Easter Eggs.



Unscramble the letters to find out where **Bubba** found the last Easter Egg.  
Inside the \_\_\_\_ (efla) \_\_\_\_ (tshahe)



**Father David, May Chock** reading at the 14th station of the cross, JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB.

# Sunday School News

By Sue Yap

The month is May - Mothers Day and graduations! The children participated in the Mother's Day service singing 'Jesus Loves Me' and recognizing all the moms, grandmas, and aunties singing, 'You Are My Sunshine!' during the offertory! The students also folded paper origami cups and enclosed a tea bag for all the ladies... "you are tea-riffic"! We love you 'moms'!

It's been an awesome, challenging year with new students, new faces and new teachers!

Thank you to the dedicated teachers and assistants - **Jamie Chock, Lillian Tyau, Lisa Anne Mitsuka Chan, Del Shea, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Melanie Langi, Peggy Graybill, Anne Symonds, Mark Haworth, James Fitzpatrick** along with **Villiami Lino!**

And our talented music teacher, **Miss Ajaon!**

The Sunday school students and acolytes will be recognized on Sunday, May 28th for their participation in the education program. Congratulations to senior **Craig Peterson!** (son of **Janyrah Tanoa White**). Congratulations also to **Lute Langi** who graduated from Kalani High School!

May 28th will be the last day of the Sunday School year.

**Miss Ajaon** will have a summer music program in classroom A during the church service, 9:00 am. **Miss Ajaon** will also have music instruments available for the children! Piano lessons are an option! Students, you are also welcome to bring your own instrument and learn a new song! Music program begins on June 18th!

Have a safe summer! See you all in August!



The Sunday School Choir performed "Jesus Loves Me" and "You Are My Sunshine" on Mother's Day during the offering.

## May Attendance

Wednesday, May 3, .....	14
Sunday, May 7, .....	214
Wednesday, May 10, .....	13
Sunday, May 14, .....	220
Wednesday, May 17, .....	14
Sunday, May 21, .....	158
Wednesday, May 24, .....	8
Sunday, May 28, .....	198



## They and We

by Peter Maurin

People say

"They don't do this,  
They don't do that,  
They ought to do this  
They ought to do that."

Always "they,"  
never "I."

It starts with "I."  
One "I"  
and one "I"  
make two "I's."

And two "I's"  
make "We"  
for "We"  
is the plural of "I."  
"We" is a community  
and "They" is a crowd.  
"They" is a mob,  
"They" is a gang  
and "They" are gangsters.

# Happy Birthday

*God's blessings on those with June birthdays!*

Jerry Goo	June 1
Kerty Esisok	
Sanson Kom	June 2
Caleb Ramelb	
Daniel Lai	June 3
Elipha Sorcey	
Wallace Tyau	June 4
Caridad Badua	
Noah Blaisdell	June 5
Molisi Toli	
Julie Eis	June 7
William Blaisdell	June 8
Teatuahere Gierlach	
Kelvin Padasdao	
Linda Venenciano	
Pearl Kau	
Margarita Suyat	
Glen Woo	
Gelsey Pulusou	
Tracy Blaisdell	June 9
Lori Ho	
Carl Eis	June 10
Charles Kokubun	June 11
Bless Salvator	
Rev. Jodene Hawkins	June 12
Kacy Hayashi	June 14
Sharon Sunagawa	June 15
Maria Bonilla	
Joan (Lani) Kealoha	June 16
Rev. Steve Costa	June 17
Lani (Joyce) Kaaihue	
Tucker Marlow	
Alan Ramos	
Estella Iwerks	
Ignacia Terno	
Kenneth Fujishige	June 18
Nakayama Michael	June 19
Lawrence Young	June 20
Ancheny Kom	
Madson Michael	
Juden Bonilla	
Caroline Anderson	June 22
Stephen Chun	
Faith Pangelina	June 23
Tyiana White	June 24
Mason Starkman	June 25
Imenta Helly	June 26
Laura Smith	June 29
Amichen Pulusou	

# Mahalo to all our volunteers!



The Institute for Human Services honored St Elizabeth's with its second annual Fr Claude DuTeil Peanut Butter Ministry Award. Congrats to all of the hard working volunteers who are constantly living out our faith by putting the good word into action! Pictured above is IHS Executive Director **Connie Mitchell** presenting the award to our own **Peggy Graybill, Deacon Steve Costa, Harlan Arakawa, Patsy Ching, Judy Kokobun**, Food Pantry Head Honcho **Charlie Kokobun**, and **Ken Yamasaki**. They received this on behalf of all of St E's MANY volunteers!!!



Cherry pancakes anyone?? Master Chef **Ken Yamasaki** with his latest award winning pancake delight!!!



A huge mahalo to **Mother Nicole Simopolous** and the students of **'Iolani School!** Grades K-12 collected Personal

Care Items from home, neighbors, and solicited extras from hotels in Waikiki to assemble "Aloha Care Kits" in Ziploc bags. Well over 200 kits were made and distributed to those in need! The older students created lesson plans on poverty and homelessness in Hawai'i and taught them to every grade in the lower school. What a thoughtful and wonderful project!