

"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

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Trinity Sunday

The Rev. David J. Gierlach

Today we celebrate the mystery of the Trinity, this strange, even incomprehensible notion that in one God there are three persons, yet one God.

And far too often, we preachers try to talk about the Trinity in ways you might visualize in your mind's eye.

So we say, the Trinity is like a mango: peel, fruit and seed, yet all one mango.

Or, its like Neopolitan ice cream: chocolate, vanilla and strawberry, yet making one ice cream cone.

But these analogies really don't get us very far; because the Trinity isn't a thing, it's a relationship — of unconditional love.

The boy was 15 when it happened.*

His dad, dean of an Episcopal college, is a rather big, sometimes gruff man who always has a lot on his mind.

The school has a baseball field with expensive, high intensity lights for night ball; and the boy loves to throw rocks up at the lights.

Oh, the lights are too high to hit, it's just the challenge of the throw that keeps the boy at it; until the day his dad catches him, yells at him, warns him to stop.

Which he does, for a awhile.

Then he starts again, and one fine morning, with his friends standing around, he launches a rock that, as soon as it leaves his hand, he knows it is the perfect throw. It goes higher than any rock he ever threw, so high it grazes one of those pricey lights, and it breaks, scattering glass all over the field.

The boy is mortified and warns his friends not to say a word, and the boy vows never to let his dad know what he did.

Except that as the weeks wear on, the secret eats at the boy. When his dad jokes with him, the boy begins to feel angry, because of his shame, because of his secret.

He withdraws from his family, gets mad at the slightest tease, and he is miserable.

When the misery reaches a point where he can't bear it any longer, he decides to own up to his dad, and drags himself to his dad's office at the school, knocks softly,

and when the booming voice from behind the large desk says to come in, he complies.

Head down, stammering, he confesses, waiting for the stinging words of rebuke, for the months of being grounded.

Instead, his dad stands up, and hugs him — tight - real tight - and the boy collapses in tears.

And the boy is changed, forever.

I'm wondering if this kind of experience, this kind of feeling, isn't this what's at the root of Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus today?

Nicodemus, a scholar and a religious leader who certainly knows and keeps the rules, he certainly knows and keeps the law, but strangely, when it comes to the true nature of God, he is clueless.

Clueless, yet totally curious about Jesus.

Curious enough to switch off the late news on TV, to head out into the midnight air to track Jesus down, where they might chat, away from the suspicious eyes of the holy rollers, of the other religious big shots.

After all, the stories about changing all that water into wine, healing the fellow born blind, telling the lame man to walk, (and lo and behold, he walks!), why, word gets around and Nicodemus is wondering...

Then there's that mess just a few days ago, what with Jesus tossing all the pay day lenders and pawn shop owners out of the Temple, causing 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.

And there's something else that's a shocker, especially for us modern, go it alone, pull yourself up by your own bootstraps people — Isaiah's hot coal, Paul's invasion of the spirit, Jesus' new birth, these aren't things we do, these are things that are done to us!

Like a dad's unexpected embrace - when we expected a beating.

Which is why Jesus, as usual, hits the nail on the head!

Think about what's going on when someone is being born it means ... someone else is giving birth!

From what I've seen, the one being born isn't doing much, the one giving birth is doing all the hard work!

Now, I've never given birth, and I'm quite sure that if men had the babies, the human race would have died out after the first generation.

But I've been around a few births, and from the outside looking in — it's a messy business.

When a mom is in labor, sweet manners and sweet talk fly out the window.

Instead, what seems to be happening is a glorious agony of sweat and tears and bodily fluids and pain and effort and well, many of you sitting here know all about 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 something like that uptight dad sitting behind his desk at the Episcopal college, who at least appears to be all prim and proper — not someone we want mad at us.

And Jesus says, that's not what God is like!

Jesus insists that God is more like a woman in labor; laboring to give birth to people 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 afterbirth of the Holy Spirit.

So how might all of this inform our faith? How might it change what we think when we think about God?

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

So imagine, if you will, that God is, every moment of every day, giving birth to humanity from a place of compassion, forgiveness and kindness, and that God has been doing this ever since humanity first stepped foot out of Africa!

What a take on God, eh?

How different from some stoic old man sitting outside of time, 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 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 pension plans — 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 is that unless we will throw caution to the winds and slide down the slippery hill of God's boundless desire to have us all, unless we are willing to take a chance on God, to knock on his door and stand before him with whatever regrets we may have, then we too, like Nicodemus, might just miss out on the indescribable joy that comes from being loved just as we are, for who we are, no matter what we've done!

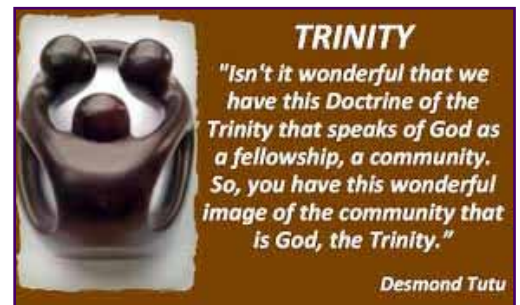
And maybe that's why the early church mothers and fathers give us this strange notion that one God is three, that three are one.....

We can't see it, we can only feel it.

Just like the wind, just like hope, just like love.

+amen

*based on *The Manger is Empty*, W. Wangerin, Jr, modified.





Happy Birthday

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

Jerry Goo	06/01	Jodene Hawkins	06/12
Kerty Esisok		Kacy Hayashi	06/14
Kerty Esisok Robert		Sharon Sunagawa	06/15
Sanson Kom	06/02	Maria Bonilla	
Caleb Ramelb		Joan (Lani) Kealoha	06/16
Elipha Sorcey	06/03	Steve Costa	06/17
Wallace Tyau	06/04	Tucker Marlow	
Caridad Badua		Alan Ramos	
Noah Blaisdell	06/05	Estella Iwerks	
Molisi Toli		Ignacia Terno	
Julie Eis	06/07	Kenneth Fujishige	06/18
William Blaisdell	06/08	Nakayama Michael	06/19
Teatuahere Gierlach		Lawrence Young	06/20
Kelvin Padasdao		Ancheny Kom	
Linda Venenciano		Madson Michael	
Pearl Kau		Juden Bonilla	
Margarita Suyat		Caroline Anderson	06/22
Glenn Woo		Stephen Chun	
Gelsey Pulusou		Faith Pangelina	06/23
Tracy Blaisdell	06/09	Tyiana White	06/24
Lori Ho		Mason Starkman	06/25
Carl Eis	06/10	Imenta Helly	06/26
Charles Kokubun	06/11	Laura Smith	06/29
Bless Salvator		Amichen Pulusou	06/30



Peace
is flowing
at the
Wednesday
healing
service!





What super duper turn outs of volunteers the Saturday morning breakfast attracts! A gaggle of seniors from Kaiser and Iolani High Schools joined our intrepid regulars, including the wonderful **Courie family!** All enjoyed his holiness the **Arch Deacon of Costa's** deeeeeelicious Portagee Bean Soup! Yummy!!!!



Auntie Lani doing the hokey pokey with **Sophia Simopoulos** during a Saturday morning breakfast feast! How cool to see youth and experience meet up for some fun!



Lovely **Leyna Esaki** and crew getting the church ready for a red riot on Pentecost! What a beautiful service celebrating the birthday of the church!!!!



Our pals **Preston and Mark** will be ordained Saturday June 4 at 10 am at the Cathedral of St. Andrew!



It's been a long and winding (windy?) road for them both and we are all so delighted that this part of a long journey is ending, with a whole new gaggle of adventures ahead!



"The totally cool bible study meets every Wednesday right after the holy healing Mass and YOU are most welcome to dive in. We go deep into the upcoming gospel lesson and while we're at it...we have a ball!!!"

Sunday School News

By Sue Yap

Busy, busy, busy...the month of May began with the children singing the offertory hymn, "Deep and Wide" on the first Sunday! The children were joined by **Fane Lino with Miss Ajaon** on the piano! Deep and wide... the fountain of God's love flows deep and wide! On Mothers Day, during the announcements, the children in classroom B acted out 'When I Take a Bath, I Think About The Lord', and all the children singing presented flowers to their Mommys, Tutus, Grannys and auntys! Children in classroom B also took home their 'props' - their wash cloth, disposable shower cap and a bar of soap! Thanks to **Miss Seine Lino** who led the children in song as the children sang the 'echo'! **Miss Heather** taught the children in classroom B the animation with the wash cloth!!!! Pentecost! The children are always excited to see the church filled with red balloons! The little ones walked into church waving their red streamers! Children in classroom A made 'spirit mobiles' all in celebration Pentecost and of the birthday of the church! Blessed Happy Pentecost Day it was!



Trinity Sunday and the last day of instructions for the 2017-2018 school year! All the children who participated in the Sunday School program were presented with certificates and a candy lei. We also recognized the acolytes who wake up early on a given Sunday morning to serve in the church! And thank you to the **acolytes and Mark and Jill Hayworth** for all the communion bread they baked!!! We also recognized our awesome band of dedicated teachers - **Jaime Chock, Lillian Tyau, Lisa Anne Mitsuka Chan, Del Shea, Heather Manning, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Melanie Langi and Miss Ajaon and Seine Lino with the music program!**

This has certainly been a school year filled with many new challenges and bright days of wondrous love for one another! The prayers, the deep thoughts, the silly mornings... the 'I don't want to... turned into 'yes' I will!!!!

This Summer has our **St. Elizabeth's Basketball Team** making us proud!!! Go Saints!!! Some of the girls expressed an interest to play basketball but they are outnumbered by the boys' team!

Miss Ajaon will again hold a 6 week music program on Sundays - watch for the start-up Sunday!

Tools For Success Campaign will start up and all items collected will be distributed to the children who sign up! Kids and moms, dads, grandparents - last year we had a very generous amount of donations and most of the children got their school list filled. As your child brings home their 'stuff' this year, take out the scissors, rulers, paper that was not used, pencils, colored pencils, ear buds... they can use them again!!!! **On the sign-up sheet, be sure to write your child's name, the school and the grade they will enter in August.**

Thank you all for your love and support of the children at St. Elizabeth's throughout the year! They are awesome to work with and are blooming like beautiful sunflowers that make us smile and proud that they are a part of our congregation!



To all of you, a safe and happy summer! Safe travels wherever you may be going and safe journey back!
Blessed Trinity!



A Message from the Youth Coordinator

By Melanie Langi



Hello All!

June already? Wow, time flies! You know what that means...SUMMERTIME! You know what else it means? NO SCHOOL!!! (And the crowd goes wild). Such an exciting time of year for our children. They always look forward to the last day of school. I know I always did when I was younger. If you're a senior in high school you will more than likely look forward to graduation. With that been said, I would like to congratulate all of this year's 2018 graduates for all of their accomplishments and successfully completing and enduring some trialsome 12 years of school. Well wishes to each of you towards a prosperous and successful future! As for those still in school, keep pushing forward, you'll get there someday!

Youth and parents what do you have planned this summer? Vacation? Summer School? Work? Stay at home? Whatever it is, just make it memorable and fun!

Hui Pu Camp is near. Anyone interested in sending your child please **see me or Seini Lino for more info**. We continue to hold **car washes every Saturday**. Come support our youth, allow them to make your car shine like the sun and sparkle like diamonds. Hehe!



BIBLE STUDY. We are in a season of drought. We need the harvest. If there is anyone you know...**INVITE, INVITE, INVITE!! Every Friday at 7pm.**

Next month, beginning **June 7th at 4 pm**, come support our very own **St. Elizabeth's Saints** as they compete in one of many games hosted by **PACTS Late Night Basketball League**

at Palama Settlement Gymnasium. **Every Thursday!**

Also beginning **June 6th**, the youth and **ANYONE** interested may **join me at St. Timothy's in Aiea** and spend an hour of your time with our Kupuna. Talking story, sharing stories, arts, crafts, and games. **Every Wednesday from 9am-10am**. Anyone interested may see me for more info.

Enjoy your summer! See you next month!

Yours truly,
Melanie Langi



A Report from Mama Joyce in Kenya:

We are doing well here, though there is still a lot of rains. I managed to visit Mama Jikoni group and Sawenge Women group. Their projects are doing well despite the rains. The Mama Jikoni group managed to put up a house for the cows, the goats are doing well. At the time of my visit it was raining heavily so I was not able to take pictures of the projects will do next time when rains reduce. With the Sawenge Young Women most of the chicken have hatched so they are working hard feeding them. Both groups said I say hi to you and your people. They also said they miss you and asked when your visit will be again. Thanks Father for your efforts. Many lives of women that you have been able to help through this projects has changed so much, they are busy working on the project, happy and at least can pay school fees for their children.



My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will
end,
nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think I am following
your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I
am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart
from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead
me by the right road,

though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow
of death.

I will not fear, for you are ever with
me,
and you will never leave me to face my
perils alone.

Thomas Merton



St. Elizabeth's Backpack Ministry

Backpacks
are put together
at St. E's to
share our Aloha,
with the Paahao
that are getting
out of prison.



NOTES FROM THE CATHOLIC WORKERS



Fr. David refers to us as "the monks." That is because we are members of a religious order, the Third Order, Society of St. Francis (TSSF). But wait, didn't we just write last month that we are Catholic Workers (CW)? Yes. We are both.

Last month we wrote about the CW movement, begun in New York City in the 1930s by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. The Franciscan movement is a bit older, founded around the year 1220 by Francis of Assisi, a man who succeeded as few others have in a literal living of the Gospel.

Originally intended as a solitary endeavor, Francis' lifestyle quickly attracted followers. Among these were men who could leave everything and live in community with him. They became known as First Order friars, wearing distinctive habits, working and preaching among the people. Women too joined the movement after the example of Saint Clare, living an enclosed life, unlike the friars who were free to roam.

These women constituted the Second Order. Finally, there were men and women who could not leave their ordinary walks of life, (someone had to mind the store!) who also wished to follow Francis. For them Francis created a Third Order.

The three orders do not imply degrees of holiness, as in 1 is better than 2, or 3 is least of all. They simply mark different responses to the Spirit's call, each living by a Rule of Life appropriate to that call. Besides, Francis would claim the lowest position, as reflected in the name he gave to the First Order, friars minor. Note: our very own bishop, Robert Fitzpatrick, is the Bishop Protector of the Episcopal First Order brothers, and he is an Associate to all 3 orders, meaning us too!

Yes, the Episcopal Church has religious orders, one being the Franciscans, including the Third Order. David joined TSSF in 1975, and Barbara in 1989. This means we are part of a religious community that lives dispersed throughout the world but by a common rule of life. Ours is a life of prayer, study and social service that strives to spread the peace and love of God while living simply. To learn more you can ask us or visit online at tssf.org. Maybe TSSF is for you too!?

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**.

Before you speak to me about your religion, first show it to me in how you treat other people; before you tell me how much you love your God, show me in how much you love all His children; before you preach to me of your passion for your faith, teach me about it through your compassion for your neighbors. In the end, I'm not as interested in what you have to tell or sell as I am in how you choose to live and give.

Corey Booker



The first work day of each month brings us out to say "No!" to nukes!! 11:30 - noon! Come on down!

