

"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

November 2015 **Compassion Cures**

Blindness

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Several years ago there was talk about avoiding some of the Bible sections that speak about the blind.

Some well meaning but probably misguided folk were concerned that these stories caused blind people to feel bad.

But blindness in Scripture really isn't about physical blindness; it's about that universal condition in all of us — our own blindness to the truth of who we are, and to whom we belong, and why we are here, and what we are called to do with the limited time we each of us have.

That's what blind Bartimaeus has to teach us today, this beggar who's so different from the people Jesus bumps into these last few weeks.

Two weeks ago, it was the rich young man who comes running up to Jesus looking for eternal life.

He leaves with his head hanging because what he owns actually owns him; and he can't bear to divorce his stuff.

Last week, James and John approach Jesus, and respond to his question: "What do you want me to do for you?" with requests for power and glory.

And here we are today, with Jesus continuing his journey on the way, moving through Jericho, the last stop before confrontation and condemnation and crucifixion in Jerusalem.

Bartimaeus isn't rich and young but poor and blind; yet he throws away the only thing he owns, the cloak that serves as his blanket at night, his umbrella in the rain, and his mat during the day; tossed away without a thought when he hears the call of the one he knows to be Messiah.

When Jesus asks him what it is that he wants, it's not to be seen, but to see; not to have followers, but to follow.

And while Jesus can't give places of honor away, he can give sight to this already insightful blind man.

The whole thrust of Mark's gospel, it seems, is to move us from blindness to sight, and from sight to insight.

And Mark assures us that even people like us can make that journey because even people like the disciples, folks as dull and slow as we are, found a way.

And he humbles us too, by introducing us to all the folks who do get it, the most unlikely crew of losers and deadbeats and bleeding women who somehow have the insight that allows them to see Jesus for who he really is.

It is children and aliens and free lancing exorcists whom Jesus commends as examples of those whom insight welcomes, even when ordinary sight urges us to reject them.

The insight that Mark tries so desperately to bring us to is that "faith is not so much right belief nor pious resignation to inscrutable providence ... it is the refusal to be silenced, it is the refusal to wait for a better time.

It is the rude insistence that the calamity be attended to — not later — but now." T.W. Jennings, *The Insurrection of the Crucified*, 175, paraphrase.

We go back over and over again to these same stories because we too are blind, we too need the healing touch of Jesus to take us from blindness to sight to insight.

Yours' truly stands at the head of the line of the blind!



Rector's Message, continued

Last week I preached on left handed power, only to go home that same day and use right handed power on my child that wasn't necessary or required. And a few weeks ago, we invited in a pregnant local gal and her boyfriend to stay in the container.

They had been sleeping on a piece of cardboard on the sidewalk by the garden. I met them, learned their names, but I didn't see who they truly are. Who they really are didn't hit me until I read the story in the paper that ran a couple weeks ago.

Her name is Marie; she's due at Christmas time, and her fiance's a handyman. I think his name is Gus and not Joseph only because God didn't want to make things that obvious!

In our broader community, there is daily discussion about the scandal of so many of our neighbors, so many of our young children, with no place to call home, no roof, no bed, no warmth at night.

Some blame the victim, others express compassion but resist solutions that may put these folks in their neighborhood.

I can't tell you how many church leaders come up and say the churches really need to do something; but when the topic moves to what their church might do, suddenly the topic switches to last night's baseball game....

But it's not only social issues where we so desperately need the healing touch of Jesus in order to move from blindness to sight to insight.

How well do we know our own inner mysteries, not to mention those of spouses, children, friends?

Why do some of our children find themselves in the midst of addiction?

Why are some of our youngsters who have so much so chronically miserable?

And why are others able somehow, to find love and laughter and life right in the midst of terrible tragedy?

There's a story about a young Jewish girl living in Nazi Germany.

Goebbles, the propaganda minister, happened to be at her school when the little girl announced: "My cat had kittens, and they're all Nazis!"

Goebbles thought this would be some great propaganda, so he arranged for the girl to be interviewed on the radio.

When the day came, Goebbles himself asked her, live on the air: "Hey Jew, tell us about your kittens."

She smiled and announced: "My cat had kittens, and they're all..... Social Democrats!"

Goebbles is upset: "That's not what you said a couple of weeks ago!"

The girl replies: "My cat had kittens, and they were all Nazis, but then their eyes were opened....their eyes were opened."

It seems to me, at the end of the day, that what opens our eyes, to our own selves, to those nearest and dearest, even to those on the streets, what opens our eyes more than any other thing is compassion.

If we can see the world and all that's within it, through the eyes of compassion, perhaps then we might come to know who indeed we truly are, why we are here, and what it is we are here to do with the limited time we each of us have.

I'll end with this story.

It's about a young woman named Sharon who, while walking downstairs with her infant, caught and sprained her ankle.

Unfortunately, the sprain developed into necrotizing fasciitis, that new illness where one's flesh is consumed.

Within three days, on her 34th birthday no less, she had her leg amputated.

When a friend stopped by and grimly commented about what a horrific birthday present Sharon received, Sharon softly disagreed:

"I found myself hovering close to death; but now I know I will live.

Before the operation, I was in this strange state of consciousness;I floated for hours on a blue sea, it was the spirit.

But what I most remember is the operating room, when I woke up immediately before amputation, how the doctors were trying to be faithful to the limited bits of knowledge that they had."

'It was as if we were all in this huge library and in our hands were but a few books, and yet -- the womb of the library was compassion.' *C. Keller, On The Mystery, 172. paraphrased*

We make our way through life with so little knowledge -- mystery surrounds every person, every community.

We are all blind to so much.

Perhaps the thing that saves us is that we live and move and have our being within this beautiful womb, a womb we call God, this womb of compassion.

If we trust it, perhaps then we too shall see.

+amen



Taking Action

The **Housing Now! Coalition** is growing like gangbusters what with 27 representatives of various community groups, non-profits, unions and churches coming together on October 27 at St. E's to plot strategy and tactics so as to get government and private folks working together to build more affordable rentals NOW! Who's showing up? Folks like **Family Promise** and **IHS** and **The Hawaii Coalition for Housing** and **Phocus** and **FACE** and **EAH** and **Local Five** and **New Hope** and **MoveOn.Org** and **St. Peter's** and **Emmanuel** and **The Cathedral** and..... Care to dive in???? Meetings are every other Tuesday at St. E's: the next gathering is November 10th at 9 am.....and no, medical marijuana is NOT provided during these meetings.....but maybe later we can talk.....



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with November birthdays!



"Ladies (and lads) in Red!"

The world famous St. Elizabeth's belle's (and boys) of the Bell Choir were in fine form Sunday, October 18, as they joined with the other three churches making up the esteemed **Chinese Christian Association**, sponsor of this year's concert held at the **United Church of Christ** on Judd Street. The angels gathered around as **Ms. Ajaon's** melodious musicians stole the evening!

- Shayna Padasdao 11/01
- Hazel Yee 11/02
- Soskey Felix 11/03
- Jess Mane Robert 11/04
- Richard Unarce 11/05
- Sarah Kleinschmidt 11/06
- Eric Arakawa, Iustina Weia, Ethleen Ieichy 11/07
- Bill Munekata, Aska Michael 11/08
- James Kealoha, Randy Timonio, Susan Murphy 11/15
- Francisco Tagle, Shazlyn Padasdao 11/16
- Jeremy Bush 11/17
- James Fitzpatrick 11/18
- Laura Iwami, Nethleen Neeto 11/19
- Alfonso Suyat, Chalemagne Julian 11/21
- Lerry Runes, Keira Ho 11/24
- Erthleen Repaky, Yenchy Repaky 11/25
- Madilta Nakayama 11/26
- Jack Marlow 11/27
- Jeanette Wong, Camerynn Micahel 11/28
- Jaura Lum



Halloween Trunk-Or-Treat Success!

What with witches and angels and decorated trunks, everyone had a BLAST Halloween night!! And for a special treat, our pals from **Tulvulau** feted us all with gorgeous singing and dancing that melted the hearts of everyone around!



AT THIS POINT IN HIS CAREER SIMON PAUSED TO REFLECT ON THE TRUE MEANING OF SUCCESS

Sunday School News

The children in classrooms A and B meet for music with **Miss Ajaon** on the 4th Sundays of each month. On All Saints Day, November 1st, the Sunday School sang “O When the Saints Go Marching In” during the offertory, lifting their voices in song as they joined by the youth, remembering all our beloved Saints. **Uncle Ned Murphy**, banjo player extraordinaire, joined them as well!

On Saturday, November 7th all acolytes and crucifers and anyone interested in becoming an acolyte, please gather at the church at 9:00 a.m. for training, prayer and immediately following - baking the communion bread. All should be done by 12:00 a.m. Many Sunday School children participate in the Sunday morning worship services. Thanks to **Preston Lentz** who has been teaching and guiding the kids! They have learned well! Acolytes and crucifers, please remember to check the schedule posted so that you are in church timely when you are scheduled.

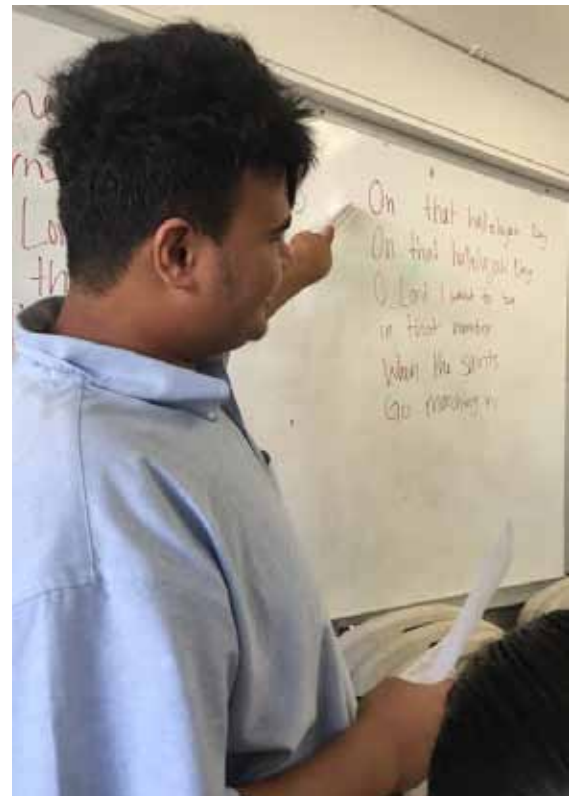
Thank you to everyone who participated and made the All Hallow’s Eve Cemetery visit and Pizza Party along with the trunk-a-treat a fun and safe Halloween night for the children, young and old!

The children are looking forward to the first Sunday in Advent, November 29th, as they count down the weeks til Christmas Day! The Advent wreath will be in place and the children will participate in the opening processional and light the candles along with a prayer.

The youth singing on All Saints Day, with Ned Murphy on banjo.



*Oh when the saints go marching in,
When the saints go marching in
Lord how I want to be in that number
When the saints go marching in!*



Catherine and Elizabeth Chan - our newest friends in Sunday School. We hope they come back and visit us soon!



My name is **Bob Kane**, a new member of St. E's, and I teach a class in hospice care at 'sIolani School. I'm also involved in a ministry that washes the feet of our houseless brothers and sisters, a ministry I'd love to start here with you.

Let me tell you why.

I was always deeply touched and humbled by the story of Jesus washing His disciples' feet just before the Passover Celebration. It's not about the dirt, it's about dignity and compassionate touch.

In Hospice and Palliative Care, touch is perhaps the greatest form of healing. With care and kindness, it transmits a healing energy and a deep peace to those who suffer.

However, not only the dying long for a human touch.

Our houseless brothers and sisters are often the untouchables amongst us, never feeling a compassionate touch, or a kind eye, but far too often loathing, disgust, hatred, and fear.

It started with a woman in Philadelphia, a "bag lady," who carried all her belongings, sitting on a park bench talking loudly to herself while tending gently to one of her bags.

Why did I approach her?

Perhaps it was I who was lost. In any case, I sat with her.

She looked at me and kept talking – answering her own questions, sometimes laughing, sometimes becoming pensive. I said hello. She smiled, "You probably think I'm nuts!"

I smiled, "No. Why would you think that?"

"Aren't folks who talk to themselves crazy?"

There was a long pause, she looked at me, tears in her eyes, "Every day I come to this park, and everyday people walk by like I'm not here. I'm all alone in a crowd. So, I talk to myself just to hear the sound of a human voice."

...After this encounter, I joined a ministry to wash and care for the feet of the houseless during winter. This ministry provided much needed foot care, socks, shoes/boots and compassionate touch.

We sit at each other's feet and offer unconditional love and kindness, asking nothing in return.

I am blessed to continue this work here on Oahu, working with the Institute for Human Services, with 'Iolani students who share in the gift of human touch, washing the feet of the houseless, reminding us all that we are all human beings.

It is my sincere hope, as a new parishioner at St. Elizabeth's, that we can share in this beautiful tradition of the heart. It would be especially wonderful if this gift of touch could be offered right here in the church. Can we do this every Thursday during Lent, wrapping up on Maundy Thursday?!

I have the basins, the towels, the soap, the lotion and the benches. I hope you will come, young and old alike, and make this a tradition at St. Elizabeth's, so that, "anywhere we sit is a mountaintop, and what used to be pain is a lovely bench where we can rest under the roses." Rumi.

Foodbank Hunger Walk



Many thanks to all of you who donated and walked and supported this years Hawaii Foodbank Walk-a-thon that saw St. E's receive **\$6,609.00** in donations and matching grants!!!! What does that mean????? It means our Food Pantry Budget for 2016 is PAID IN FULL! MANY THANKS!!

The 47th Annual Diocesan Convention

Highlights taken from Father David Gierlach, from the Episcopal Church in Hawaii E-News Letter, and from their Facebook page



What a wonderful service at the Iolani School Chapel when four, count 'em 4, yes IV, of our local folks were ordained as transitional deacons by our Bishop. **Phyllis Mahi Beimes, Paul Nahoa Lucas, John Hau'oli Tomoso,** and our very own (adopted) **Malcom Keleawe Hee** have taken the big plunge toward the ordained priesthood.....coming.....by the will of God and yessir of the people.....this very Easter!! Congrats to you all!!



The **Rev. Malcolm Naea Chun** and **Fane Lino** led an afternoon session dealing with conflict and encouraging reconciliation in a congregation. Participants broke up into groups to discuss actual scenarios of conflict that have come up in Hawai'i congregations. Each group was led and facilitated by participants in the Waiolaihui'ia, the local priest formation program.



Following the Convention Eucharist, a Pupu Reception was held where four persons received the Bishop's Cross (Koa Box), recognized for their outstanding service to the Diocese. Pictured above with **Bishop Bob** are the recipients, our very own **Stuart Ching, Lynne Reynolds, Cecilia Fordham** and **Martha Im**. Congratulations, **Stuart!**



Right: **Mother Imelda Padasdao** speaking at the convention.



Left: **Seini Lino** and **Maris Jones** helping to (wo)man the check in table.





Attendance

Sunday, Oct 4, Eucharist & Vespers	225
Wednesday, Oct 7, Eucharists	16
Sunday, Oct 11, Eucharists & Vespers	198
Wednesday, Oct 14, Eucharist	18
Sunday, Oct 18, Eucharists & Vespers	210
Wednesday, Oct 21, Eucharist	21
Sunday, Oct 25 Eucharists & Vespers	251
Wednesday, Oct 28, Eucharist	27

...AND THEN HE TRIED TO KISS ME!!
 SO I TOTALLY WENT 2 TIMOTHY 2:22
 AND MATTHEW 5:28, AND HE'S, LIKE,
 "WHOA!" THEN I HIT HIM WITH
 PROVERBS 27: 6 AND FINISHED
 WITH 2 PETER 2 :17-22. OH YEAH!!
 HE WON'T BE TRYING THAT AGAIN!



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IF YOU KNOW INJUSTICE
 AND YOU DON'T GET ANGRY,
 YOU DON'T KNOW

IF YOU GET ANGRY
 AND YOU DON'T FIGHT,
 YOU AREN'T ANGRY

IF YOU FIGHT
 AND YOU DON'T LOVE,
 YOU'RE JUST FIGHTING

IF YOU LOVE,
 AND YOU KNOW INJUSTICE,
 AND YOU GET ANGRY,
 AND YOU FIGHT,
 THERE IS HOPE

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November Pledge Drive

It's that time again when we humbly ask your support for St. Elizabeth's many ministries; none of which are possible without your prayers, love and money! Here are a few fun facts to consider as you consider your pledge.....The average Episcopal pledge in Hawaii is \$1942 per year.....with average annual pledges ranging from \$5092 at St. Nicolas in Kapolei to \$1090 at Good Samaritan in Palolo..... Here at St. E's.....we are at \$1448 average pledge per year.....putting us in 26th place among 35 parishes.....**Our goal this year is to increase our average annual pledge to \$2000!!** Can or no can??? Of course we can!!! Fill out the Pledge Card provided and give it to the office for safe keeping. Mahalo for your support and kokua!!!



"Prayer begins at the edge of emptiness. Wonder rather than doubt is the root of all knowledge. Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy. We can never sneer at the stars, mock the dawn, or scoff at the totality of being."

"Self-respect is the root of discipline: The sense of dignity grows with the ability to say no to oneself. The primary purpose of prayer is not to make requests. The primary purpose is to praise, to sing, to chant. Because the essence of prayer is a song, and man cannot live without a song."

"When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I am old, I admire kind people. Know that every deed counts, that every word is power... Above all, remember that you must build your life as if it were a work of art."

~**Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel**

(January 11, 1907 – December 23, 1972)