

"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 2014 **Law and Love**

The Right Reverend
Robert L. Fitzpatrick
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

The Reverend
Imelda S. Padasdao,
Priest Associate

The Reverend Dr.
Gerald G. Gifford,
Rector Emeritus

The Reverend Peter S. M. Fan,
Cantonese Language Priest

Hsiao Ying "Ajaon" Chen
Choir Director

Marie Wang
Organist

Katherine Crosier
Parish Administrator
Editor and Layout
Music Consultant

Caren Esaki
Senior Warden

David Kleinschmidt,
Junior Warden

Dawn Yadao, Secretary

Mary Ann Lentz
Treasurer

Website:
www.stelizabeth720.org

Email:
stelizabethhawaii@gmail.com

By The Rev. David J. Gierlach

Perhaps you have been following the drama unfolding as our Roman Catholic brothers struggle with issues of law and love, especially as these two foundation stones of the faith, law and love, impact the modern family.

They are hip deep in many of the same discussions that our own Anglican community has wrestled with over the last 40 years, often, like us, with the same hurtful words being tossed about, often with dialog degenerating into accusations and condemnations.

Law and love.

It's a tricky business.

It's what is at the core of today's rather odd gospel lesson, which begins with a snarky lawyer (is there any other kind, you ask?) trying to trip up Jesus yet again.

Last week they came after him about taxes and whether or not to pay them.

Next came the trick question about the woman who married seven brothers — whose wife would she be after the resurrection?

And now today, the lawyer asking Jesus to rank the most important of the 631 laws of God — knowing full well that Jewish tradition says there can be no ranking — if God makes laws, then all laws are equal.

What Jesus does with this challenge is a beautiful thing to behold.

In a way, he picks up a pair of glasses, and puts them on, and says something like this: "all law is intended to be seen and understood and followed and interpreted

and obeyed through the lens of love - love of God being the right lens and love of your brothers and sisters being the left lens."

And so when we wrestle with the law that says people of the same gender having sexual relations is an abomination — things change when we look at that law through the lens of love.

What comes into focus is that when that Biblical law was written down, it was NOT speaking about people of the same gender living in committed, self-sacrificing, loving relationships.

Instead, it was speaking of wealthy men preying on young boys, or engaging in sex for the sake of the sex, demeaning and dehumanizing the participants; so of course when that type of behavior is viewed through the lens of love — of course it is an abomination — just as any sexual relationship engaged in without love and commitment and sacrifice falls short of who we are called to become.

Just so, a committed, giving, and loving relationship between two people, irrespective of gender, seen through the lens of love, is something to be blessed, something to be welcomed.

And this is the point it seems that Jesus wishes to make with our lawyer today.

Every rule, every expectation, every prohibition, every command is given life and breathes and inspires and guides us all from the rootstock of love.

Without love there is only lifeless, arbitrary, and power-driven law; which is why, as we discovered weeks ago, Jesus gives



Rector's Message, continued

us the power to bind and loose all rules and traditions and laws (Mt 16:19-20) — precisely because life changes, societies change, human relations change - so that a living law, lived through and interpreted according to the lens of love, lived through and interpreted through the Spirit of the living God — can and must change as well.

Only through the lens of love, the love of God and of each other, can we see clearly to decide what needs to be bound and what needs to be loosed.

God is not finished with us yet!

There are some among us who were born in an age when women could not vote, much less aspire to answer God's call to ordained life; we are only a few generations removed from a time when African-Americans were deemed to be three-fifths of a human being, and in my lifetime, it was illegal for persons of different races to marry one another in many of these United States.

Law and love: it tests us every day, especially perhaps when we get right down to debating what it is that God wishes for us.

Listen to just a smattering of the comments that flew around this last weekend as the brothers in Rome tried to find a way forward through their own tangle of law and love:

“This is why I left the Catholic Church and don't care about organized religion. Who are we to judge who other people love???”

“That is NOT being judgmental, it is letting God's word be the judge.”

“You mean that collection of notes and scraps written by men and collected over several centuries and then voted upon by another group of men that somehow then became the actual Word Of God?”

“Deuteronomy says you should stone disobedient children? Should we warn child protective services about you?”

“I do not want to go to an Homophobic Heaven, that wasn't in Christ's teachings.”

And so it goes....

I think that snarky lawyer was trying to draw Jesus into just such an exchange; but of course, wearing the glasses of love, Jesus sidesteps the pitched and fraught attacks and gently leads us to catch a glimpse of the world as God always intended it to be.

And that's what brings us to the last part of the gospel — that odd and obscure discussion about who the Messiah is in relation to King David.

Maybe your eyes glazed over at that part, maybe they are glazing over right now!

Who cares about this inside baseball of Jewish religious thinking?

Well, we probably ought to care.

Because what Jesus seems to be getting at is this: The Jewish people expected the Messiah to be David's son, and as the son, to follow in the father's footsteps: to be the Arnold Schwarzenegger of Israel and to root out the outsiders, to establish forever the lines between good and bad, clean and unclean, us and them.

But Jesus tells them that the Messiah is not a chip off the old block: the Messiah is something altogether new; bringing into existence a world that is not made up of insiders and outsiders, but a world that welcomes every last one of us.

And perhaps Jesus is saying something like that to us as well.

That Jesus, he whom through all things are created, has a reach far broader than the laws of our church as he gathers together so many who are beyond the reach of the church — that the lens of love is determined to have us all: Christian and Jew, Hindu and Buddhist; straight and gay; every creed and no creed, all are the beloved children of this God who makes all things, who makes all people, new.

I leave you with this.

It is the imagining of a self-hating, rock bottom, lost it all alcoholic who, in a drunken speech spoken to no one, says this about the final judgment of God:

“And he will judge and forgive them all, the good and the evil, the wise and the meek.

And when he is done with all of them, then he will summon us.

‘You too come forth ye drunkards, come forth ye weak ones, come forth ye children of shame.’

And we shall all come forth without shame and shall stand before him.

And he will say to us: ‘You are swine made in the image of the beast and with his mark. But come ye also.’

And the wise ones and those with understanding will say:

Rector's Message, continued

'O Lord, why dost thou receive these men?'

And he will say:

'This is why I receive them, O ye of understanding.

Not one of them believed himself to be worthy of this!'

And he shall hold out his hands to us and we shall fall down before him.....and we shall weep....and we shall understand all things and all will be understood.'" Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*.

Law and love.

In the end, there is only love.

+amen

Happy 92nd Birthday!



Happy 92nd Birthday to **Betty Awakuni**, shown here with son **Wayne Awakuni** and husband, **Shigeru Awakuni**.

Shigeru is 95 and while a little hard of hearing, is still sharp as a tack. He enjoys reminiscing about work projects here at St. E's like laying our concrete sidewalks and other major efforts here on the grounds. The Awakunis always have a big smile for everyone, a warm hello and lots of aloha! We are grateful for their membership.

*What the caterpillar calls the end of the world,
the master calls a butterfly.*

- Richard Bach

Drum Roll, please!

Through the generosity of the parishioners of St. Elizabeth's and Foodland's Community Matching Gifts Program, we received a check for . . .



\$7,730.23!

through the Give Aloha program in September! This includes \$6,439.00 given by St. Elizabeth's members, \$1,080.06 by Foodland and \$211.17 by Western Union.

Thank you all for your generosity!



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At Oahu Cemetery



What a BLAST on Halloween Night! Despite dark skies (would you expect any less?) over 30 of our youth made their way to Oahu Cemetery for our second annual **Service in the Cemetery.**

Starting off singing *Amazing Grace*, then moving to that great lesson from Ezekiel (dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones!) and then the great promise of a new heaven and a new earth in Revelation, it was a terrific reminder of our mortality, remembering those buried beneath our feet once walked and sang and danced as we do now, remembering that the grave also awaits all of us -- and remembering that the grave is not the end of it -- as we all await the day when we, like Jesus, will be called out of our graves, into a new and wonderfully complete life.





Baptisms on All Saints

On All Saints Sunday, we were delighted to baptize **Julie Eis** (16), **Torrez Eis** (13), **Saram Eis** (20), **Grand Olobwy Eis** (4), **Taryn Eis** (15), and my personal favorite, **Carl Marx Eis** (3) (*pay attention my conservative friends, we just baptized the namesake of world-wide communism!*).

Following the baptisms, our youngsters led us all in a rousing rendition of *When The Saints Come Marching In*, as the little ones indeed marched all around the church!!



Silence

Silence is a great help to a seeker after truth. In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is a long and arduous quest after Truth, and the soul requires inward restfulness to attain its full height.

- Mohandas K. Gandhi

CHINESE CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION ANNUAL BANQUET

Please come by at 5 pm on Saturday, November 8 at the Golden Palace Restaurant for the annual CCA banquet! CCA is among the oldest continuously existing social groups in Hawaii. It was commissioned by King Kalakaua himself!

CCA has been and continues to be a tremendous supporter of St. Elizabeth's Youth and Outreach efforts and we are most grateful for that support. Please help us say thank you to this great organization by attending this wonderful event. Just \$25 and all you can eat!!



St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
Cordially invites you to
Our Wine Tasting Event

A Taste of St. Elizabeth's


All Proceeds to Our
Outreach & Scholarship Programs

Tickets: \$35 per person

Enjoy fine wines, great gourmet foods and a silent auction.
Silent auction begins at 6 p.m. and prices will vary.

December 13th
6:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

770 North King Street,
Honolulu, Hawaii, 96817 *Parking is available.*




Happy Birthday

*God's blessings to
those with November birthdays!*

Shayna Padasdao	11/1
Hazel Yee	11/2
Soskey Felix	11/3
Jess Mane Robert	11/4
Richard Unarce	11/5
Sarah Kleinschmidt	11/6
Iustina Weia	11/7
Eric Arakawa	11/7
Ethleen Ieichy	11/7
Aska Michael	11/8
Bill Munekata	11/8
Randy Timonio	11/15
James Kealoha	11/15
Susie Murphy	11/15
Francisco Tagle	11/16
Shazlyn Padasdao	11/16
Jeremy Bush	11/17
James Fitzpatrick	11/18
Laura Iwami	11/19
Nethleen Neeto	11/19
Alfonso Suyat	11/21
Charlemagne Julian	11/21
Lerry Runes	11/24
Keira Ho	11/13
Yenchy Repaky	11/25
Erthleen Repaky	11/25
Madilta Nakayama	11/26
Jack Marlow	11/27
Jeanette Wong	11/28
Camerynn Michael	11/28
Laura Lum	11/29

Wine Tasting and Silent Auction

**Taste of St. Elizabeth's
Saturday, December 13
6:00 to 9:30 pm**

Before we know it, Saturday, December 13 will be here -- what with great wines courtesy of our pal **Michael Hopkins** and mouth watering gourmet food stations all surrounded by excellent entertainment and a top notch silent auction. Tickets are a staggeringly cheap \$35!!

If you can donate a golf game or a hotel night or maybe a really cool gift basket, we'd love to be on the receiving end as we stock our auction. As you know, all proceeds benefit our outreach and scholarship funds.



*Look at all the
bananas from
St. Elizabeth's
Community
Garden!*



Attendance

Sunday, Oct. 5	208
Wednesday, Oct. 8	13
Sunday, Oct. 12	202
Wednesday, Oct. 15	29
Sunday, Oct. 19	150
Wednesday, Oct. 22	17
Sunday, Oct. 26	207

Monthly Medical March for Mercy

So sorry to report that the United States Supreme Court has agreed that Hawaii need not pay the medical costs for our Micronesian friends. This responsibility truly does lie with the federal government, which for over 50 years has had free reign over the oceans and islands of Micronesia, yet refuses to pay the needed medical costs of a people who have suffered the effects of radiation poisoning from atomic bomb testing, who have seen their subsistence culture of fish and taro turned into a ghastly diet of canned meats and starchy rice.

Summary of 66 Nuclear Tests over Marshall Islands (1946-1958):

- 43 at Enewetak Atoll
- 23 at Bikini Atoll

Largest Hydrogen Bomb "Bravo" on March 1, 1954: 15 Megatons Equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima Bombs

Total of 66 Bombings: Equivalent to 7,200 Hiroshima Bombs

600 Hiroshima Bomb/year & 1.6 Hiroshima Bomb/day over 12-year Nuclear Testing Program

Please dear friends, use this opportunity to write to your Washington DC representatives and ask them to please RESTORE Medicaid benefits to Micronesian/COFA immigrants. It truly is a matter of life and death.

Because of the holidays, we will resume our Monthly March on the LAST THURSDAY of January and take it up again every month in 2015!!

"When you wake up in the morning, called by God to be a self again, if you want to know who you are, watch your feet. Because where your feet take you, that is who you are."

F. Buechner, *The Alphabet of Grace*, 25



"... and our Men's Quiche Fellowship meets every Sunday morning at seven."

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Tackling Our Housing Crisis

Hawaii State Capitol Auditorium

**Keynote Speaker
Mayor Kirk Caldwell**

**Saturday, Nov. 15, 2014
8 am - 3 pm**

Join this community-wide discussion of developers, government officials and concerned citizens to help SOLVE our housing crisis.



**Organized by
Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE)**

**Free Event!
Lunch included**



Nothing

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore, we must be saved by hope.

Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore, we must be saved by faith.

Nothing we do, however virtuous, could be accomplished alone; therefore, we must be saved by love.

No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of our friend or foe as it is from our own standpoint; therefore, we must be saved by the final form of love, which is forgiveness.

Reinhold Niebuhr

Sunday School News

The Sunday School continues to use the new curriculum and the music was shared with the congregation on All Saints Day. As children move in and out of the neighborhood, we have a variety of children that makes teaching the Sunday School so challenging!

The children and teachers have seen many new faces in these past couple Sundays. The enrollment continues to be around 30 children each Sunday. The second Sundays of the month **Fane Lino** takes her class to visit other churches and they share their music.

On All Saints Day the children sang, *When the Saints Go Marching In*, Fane's youth sang and played the ukuleles, the younger children, led by Lee and Es-fin on tambourines, marched through the church singing, gathering in the front to sing together, *'The Circle of Love'*.

November 15, Saturday, **Preston Lentz** will meet with children 12 years and older who are interested in serving as acolytes. Children who are interested, please come to the meeting on November 15th. See Preston, Fr. David or any of the teachers for more information.



Thanksgiving Day Service

Thursday, Nov. 27th • 9:00 am

The Altar Guild has traditionally decorated the altar with fruits and vegetables for this service. Please share your harvest and bring your donations to the church office by Wednesday morning, November 26th. We will also be receiving canned and non-perishable food items for our Food Pantry.

We are thankful for all God's blessings—please be generous!