

*"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

**October 2017**

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## Jesus and the Cosmic Christ

*The Rev. David J. Gierlach*

Probably the most common spin we give to today's parable is "it's never too late to get saved."

Whether you show up at the beginning of the day or the end, in your childhood or old age, God is always waiting for you, always ready for you.

We've all seen those movie scenes where the really bad guy is taking his last breaths and the priest hears his confession just at the last minute, ensuring that Mr Nogoodnick is now on the right side of God.

And all of this is fine, as far as it goes.

But, truth be told, it doesn't go very far at all, because it's all tied up with a very private, very "me and Jesus" take on my relationship with the Creator of all things.

But what if Jesus is getting at something very different indeed? What if Jesus is asking us to look hard at our own economic systems on the one hand; and what if he's also challenging just how we envision salvation; not only for ourselves, but for the whole world, and everyone in it.

In some ways, this parable can be seen from two points of view: from Jesus the itinerant Galilean prophet who meets and heals ordinary people every single day; and from the point of view of the Christ; the Word of God, in which all things hold together.

It's at once a parable that is very down to earth, and a parable with cosmic implications...

Let's begin with the "down to earth" part.

This part begins with a warning, a warning not to take these parables at face value, because, as Clarence Jordan says, "Whenever Jesus tells a parable, he lights a stick of dynamite and covers it with a story."

So here's a question for you: what might this latest stick of dynamite be saying about how we run our economy today?

Not only are we a society that worships me,"

(have you seen those selfie sticks??) but we also worship "more" — as in, I can never have "enough!"

Just look at the pay rates for big bosses and the pay rates for the ordinary Joe and Jane.

"Between 1978 and 2014, CEO pay increased by almost 1,000%, according to ... the Economic Policy Institute.

Meanwhile, typical workers in the U.S. saw a pay raise of just 11% during that same period, making the ratio between CEO pay and worker pay 300-to-1.

In 1965 the ratio was 20-to-1." Fortune Magazine, 6/21/15. (Modified).

We are living with the results of this monstrous disparity which sees a vast swath of the country now underemployed and underpaid, leading to envy and resentment, creating the breeding grounds for the politics of fear and despair.

Sadly, those most impacted by this disparity usually focus not on the wealthy few who pad their own nest with unimaginable wealth, but on their fellow victims, who happen to be of a different ethnicity or religion or race; which is fine and dandy for the guys at the top (and they are almost always "guys"), since as long as we're fighting each other, the bigwigs have little to fear.

The first stick of dynamite Jesus lights today seems to be aimed at these rich and privileged folks.

Don't think of the landowner who hires the men as a stand-in for God.

Let's see him as simply a landowner who has more than enough.

And he sees to it that everyone who works for him has enough, whether they work the whole day or just for an hour.



# Rector's Message, continued

What might our society look like if we insisted that everyone be provided with enough?

What might things look like if everyone is guaranteed a minimum livable income?

These I think may be questions Jesus asks us to wrestle with in this society of ours that tends to see wealth as something the individual owns, and is entitled to, forgetting that God owns this world, and any wealth that may come my way comes to me as a trustee, someone expected to use it for the benefit of others, because at the end of the day, it all belongs to God.

Jesus isn't asking us to wrestle with this because it's an interesting intellectual exercise or a lovely question of philosophy.

Listen to how the parable begins:

"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a householder who went out early to hire laborers..."

He's telling us what God's kingdom is like; and its got nothing to do with fancy celestial condos or endless rounds of heavenly golf...

God's kingdom is like this fellow, this generous fellow, going out to hire workers....

Meaning, if you want to live in God's kingdom happily, you gotta start learning how

they think in God's kingdom!

Just like last week's parable where the fellow forgiven a bazillion dollars ends up in the clink, NOT because God put him there, but because he puts himself there!

By rejecting generosity and insisting on bean counting, our poor fellow last week made a real mess of things.

If you can't learn to love the upside down way of God's hilarious grace, if you insist that beans be counted and scores settled, and that everyone gets their just desserts, well then, where are you going to end up?

You'll end up like the first hired hands in today's parable, who walk away from the generous master all mad and salty, because they refuse to see the world and their fellow human beings through the eyes of the compassionate landowner.

If we hope to one day live within the kingdom of God, we better start practicing kingdom thinking, and kingdom living, here and now, or when the time comes and the invitation is made, those who haven't made the shift will most likely take a peek inside heaven's gates — and see only hell.

That's the "Jesus" take on today's parable.

What about the "Christ" point of view?

Every time I stand here and preach what I hope is the word of the Lord, (and not David's word!), I am confronted by our gorgeous stained glass at the back of the church.

It bears the symbols of all the world's major religions.

For some of us, it means we welcome people of all religious traditions to worship here.

to dive deeply into the mystery of Christ.

This Christ in whom we live and move and have our being.

This Christ who is the second person of the Trinity.

This Christ who is the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end.

And when we go there, this beautiful stained glass reminds me that all faiths, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Taoist and so on, all theists and all atheists, all animists and Shamins and Wiccans; that all of creation is indeed on the road to Christ, who came that the world might have life; who, when he is lifted up on the cross, draws the whole world to himself.

Seen cosmically, the parable today is about the folly of religious wars and fights and claims of superiority, as God, like the landowner, calls all humanity home.

If we are the beloved of God, it's not because of what we have done, it is because of what God has done for us — in Christ.

Look into the night sky with its trillions of stars, its billions of galaxies and wonder — if this stunning magnificence is the creation we live in — then what must the creator be like?

Beyond all of our imaginings...beyond all of our imaginings...

Perhaps today, the good news is we can forget about deserving the good things God has in store for us; we can forget about deciding who's early and who's late, and smile at the pure graciousness of this loving God, who frees us not because we are good, but because God is good.

+amen





The kazillionth annual Foodbank Bataan Death March (TWICE around Restaurant Row...whew!!!) was a Total Blast and it enabled St E's to generate some \$3000+ smakaroots which is then added to by friends of the Foodbank! Many thanks to **Charlie, Caren, Ken, Larry, Collette and Lynette** for making St E's proud and for managing to make it to the finish line! And just before that march-a-thon, the boys of the **Aiea JV Football team** appeared to mingle with our breakfast guests, to cook and serve and to maybe come to see our houseless folks in a slightly different light.



## Happy Birthday

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

Annette Chee-Akana	October 1
Raquel Timonio	
Jermic Shuru	
Cheshina Eis	
Isi Lavulavu	October 4
Carole Fujishige	October 5
Rebecca Steffey	October 6
Jamie Chock	October 8
Daniel Tyau	
Inorie Eichey	October 9
Michelle Ramos	
Daniel Oshiro	
Mia Starkman	
K.O. Muludy	October 10
Kilisilola Fane Lino	October 11
David Kleinschmidt	October 12
Nora Blaisdell	October 14
Beryl Goo	
Rayn White	
Judith Kokubun	October 15
Shigeru Awakuni	October 17
Kolby Batangan	October 18
Maileen Cardenas	
Viola Arabe	October 19
Victor Noket	
Donovan Young	October 20
Jayden-Ryan Ruz	
Jonson Jong	October 21
Suzanne Shak	
Wynter Marlow	October 22
Dennis Akauola	
Katherine Crosier	October 24
Collette Arakawa	
Luciano Sarceda	October 25
Antor Raymond	
Alex Nagamine	
Kjirstin Propernick	
Ariel Badua	October 26
Casey-Eder Sungalu	
Tate Anderson	
Ester Tyau	October 29
RaeLynne Steffey	
Betty F. Awakuni	October 30
Lydia Vallejo	
Kris Sorcay	October 31

# A Message from the Youth Coordinator

By **Melanie Langi**

Hello All,

Welcome October! Welcome Fall...if there's such a season here in Hawaii. Regardless, Hawaii has some of the best weather on the planet. We are so lucky to live Hawaii!

With that been said, I'm looking forward to the holidays. Halloween kicks off the holiday season and I cannot wait for our annual Trunk or Treat event this year. For you who haven't heard of this before it's trick or treating out of the trunks of our cars, trucks, vans, buses, etc. Where we dress up our cars and pass out candy to the neighborhood ghouls and goblins! Happening Halloween night here on our church grounds.

Father David will also have a twilight service at a graveyard praying for those that have gone before us. Anyone who's brave enough may also join him.

More details to follow as Halloween gets near!

**ATTENTION! CALLING ALL YOUTH!**

Youth Sunday School is in full swing every Sunday mornings in Shim Hall beginning at 9am. Youth in grades intermediate to high school are highly encouraged to participate.

We also have youth bible study ongoing every Friday night at 7ish. Come journey with us through the bible, walk alongside Jesus and his disciples, fellowship with us, and bring a friend!

Gardening and painting anyone? Behind Shim Hall there's a small area next to the Youth Room where we can garden. And then there's painting of the Rectory. There is a work day this month. Everyone and anyone are invited and encouraged to come out and lend a hand in preparing the ground, painting, and of course cleaning our beautiful church. Let's work together and have some fun!

Whelp, that's all I have for now.

Your friend,

Melanie Langi

## September Attendance

Sunday, September 3,.....	207
Wednesday, September 6,.....	17
Sunday, September 10,.....	204
Wednesday, September 13,.....	17
Sunday, September 17,.....	159
Wednesday, September 20,.....	21
Sunday, September 24,.....	191
Wednesday, September 27,.....	15



**Uncle Mosese** and his loyal gang held a fab fundraiser; clean your ride and fill your tummy, a true one stop shop!





We shall again have Service in the Cemetery" on Halloween night at about 6:30 pm, remembering that we are all bound for the grave, but for the grace of God! Come for the service and maybe you'll see Fr David once again nearly burn off his toes when the incense starts falling all over the place!

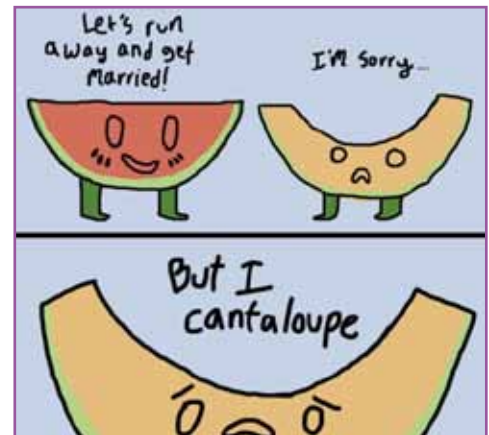


Annnnnnd!!!!!! It's also the night for Trick or Trunk and Teen Night Dance-a-thon and Pizza Extravaganza!!!!!! Loads of fun as the car trunks are snazzied up, trick or treaters wander the parking lot and not the roadways & a good time is had by all!!!



Evidence! Three St. E's women make pilgrimage to Holy Land Sept. 2017, **Beryl Goo, Seini Lino and Rev. Jodene Hawkins.** Joining St. E's 2010 Pilgrim **Christine Ling** (gone to glory).

"Dear Human:  
 You've got it all wrong. You didn't come here to master unconditional love. That is where you came from and where you'll return. You came here to learn personal love. Universal love. Messy love. Sweaty love. Crazy love. Broken love. Whole love. Infused with divinity. Lived through the grace of stumbling. Demonstrated through the beauty of... messing up. Often. You didn't come here to be perfect. You already are. You came here to be gorgeously human. Flawed and fabulous. And then to rise again into remembering. But unconditional love? Stop telling that story. Love, in truth, doesn't need ANY other adjectives. It doesn't require modifiers. It doesn't require the condition of perfection. It only asks that you show up. And do your best. That you stay present and feel fully. That you shine and fly and laugh and cry and hurt and heal and fall and get back up and play and work and live and die as YOU. It's enough. It's Plenty."  
 - Courtney A. Walsh



# Acolyte training and Communion Bread baking!!



J-Jr has listened and learned well! Carrying the candle with respect and dignity! Each week we will see another newly trained acolyte serving with the trained and old-timers like Nathan!

Thanks, Mark for the acolyte training and we're looking forward to that awesome communion bread that Jill and the acolytes baked!



Deacon Steve Costa and Mark Haworth teaching the ins and outs of being an acolyte! Eager to help and serve the Lord in the church! Children of all ages, and young adults are welcome to help! See Mark Haworth, Deacon Steve Costa or Father David.



Serve dutifully, respectfully and hold the cross stable!!!!

Don't get easily distracted... stay focused!!!



# Sunday School News

By Sue Yap

The Sunday School classes are beginning to 'over-flow' with bright-eyed, eager-to-learn students! **Jamie Chock's** preschool class has an average of 9 - 12 students each sunday! **Miss Lillian Tyau** is just super at keeping track of all the little heads constantly in motion around the room til story time!!!

Thanks to **Lisa Anne Mitsuka Chan**, never missing a beat and picking up right where she left off before moving to and back from L.A. - only the 'kids' she taught are now in high school and beyond!!!! And thanks to **Del Shea** who always has a smile and helps the younger children, along with **Heather Manning** in the classroom once a month, the children in Classroom A are buzzing with knowledge! We welcomed new friends and old familiar ones who pulled acolyte duties every Sunday through the summer! Bible quizzes, gospel readings, prayers, crafts... this past Sunday learning the symbols of baptism - did anyone share their fluttering dove? And on the 4th Sundays it's music with **Miss Ajaon!** The Sunday School shares their music with the congregation on the 2nd Sunday of each month singing the offertory hymn!

And many, many thanks to **Melanie Langi** stepping up and picking up the Sunday class instructions with the middle and high-schoolers meeting in Shim Hall! 4 students moved up from Classroom A. Melanie has an average of 6 to 8 students a week.

The students are now in the spooky halloween mode...wondering what spirits will dance in the graveyards and on the walls on halloween night! Looking forward to All Saints Day - the children are ready - join them as they sing 'When The Saints Come Marching In'!!! Any banjo players ready to strike up the notes for the kids? The kids' got the rhythm!!!!

Peace and Blessings to all!

After an inspiring acolyte training with **Mark Haworth** and **Deacon Steve Costa** - all hands washed, Lloyd time to mix, knead, roll and press the dough out - into the oven for Communion! Thanks for your awesome service! Head baker, Chef **Jill Haworth!**





**Doug Ing** cracks up **Vivian** as they both paint thousands of bread slices with deeeelicious p & j.



**Chef extraordinaire Ken Yamasaki** is the Man on the Grill, secretly removing calories and cholesterol from all these yummy delights.



Meanwhile, the ladies are on a roll, **Anne and Donna, Lynette** and a different **Ann** and their mouth watering delights!



I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.  
 Not enough to explode my soul or disturb my sleep,  
 but just enough to equal a cup of warm milk  
 or a snooze in the sunshine.  
 I don't want enough of God to make me love a  
 black man  
 or pick beets with a migrant.  
 I want ecstasy, not transformation.  
 I want warmth of the womb, not a new birth.  
 I want a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack.  
 I would like to buy \$3 worth of God, please.

~ Wilbur Rees



**"When someone steals another's clothes, we call them a thief. Should we not give the same name to one who could clothe the naked and does not? The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry; the coat unused in your closet belongs to the one who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the one who has no shoes; the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor."**

~ SAINT BASIL