

"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

September 2015 Rivals

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

Donovan Young, Secretary

Mary Ann Lentz
Treasurer

Website:
www.stelizabeth720.org

Email:
stelizabethhawaii@gmail.com

The Rev. David J. Gierlach, rector

How do we see each other?

That's the question each of today's readings invites us to sit with.

And the fact is, the way we often see each other is as rivals; you have what I want, whether that be money or a house or a girl or boyfriend or power or a name.

It's in our genes.

How else to explain the kindergarten class that has 10 identical stuffed bunnies, only to find the children fighting over just one?

Being rivals over anything and everything is all around us.

I remember my first year in the seminary.

Some very pretty school teachers came by to talk to us about volunteering to teach at the nearby Catholic Middle School.

As I and one of my classmates did our best to flirt with this one lovely teacher..... bam!

My brother in the Lord — socked me in the ribs!

I'm sure I made a smart aleck remark that deserved the punch.....because rivalry is everywhere.

The flip side of being rivals is to think about what brings us together.

When you think about it, what seems to bring us together most quickly is when we find ourselves faced with a common enemy.

Look at how united the country was after the September 11 attacks, if you weren't a Muslim.

The people of Chattanooga have said over and over how the recent shooting has brought people together like nothing since 9/11.

And many of you will recall, when this country entered World War II, there was amazing unity — unless you were Japanese American, who found themselves in internment camps.



Unity against a common enemy is as old as mankind.

It's still rivalry, but instead of me against you, it's us against them.

Even the Bible is chock full of rivalry!

And there's no better example than today's story about King David.

You'd think you're watching an episode of that TV crime show, *48 Hours*, what with King David arranging for the murder of his new girlfriend's husband.

Just like the TV show, there's plenty of intrigue before David does the dirty deed.

First, he gets her pregnant!

Then, he starts manipulating — make it look like the husband is the father — bringing him back from the battlefield, getting him drunk, sending him home to what David hopes will be some romance by the soldier on leave.

But Uriah is a stand up guy — no fun for him while his pals are at war!

So David moves to Plan B, arranging Uriah's murder — shamelessly putting the murder contract in Uriah's own hands, making Uriah the delivery man for his own death sentence.

Such are the things that rivalry does.....

Fast forward to today, we have the amusement provided by the Republican party's presidential front runner (you know? Mr. Trump?) who categorizes and labels and then dismisses whole swaths of humanity.

Rector's Message, continued

And this, it seems to me, is exactly what Jesus is trying to free us from, when he sees this great crowd — and encounters them not as rivals but as people, created and sustained by the Living God.

The disciples see only a hungry mob, rivals for food and for the money needed to buy that food.

Seeing with those eyes, they start to divide: 5000 by a few loaves and a couple fish equals not nearly enough.

But Jesus, seeing with the eyes of God, begins to multiply: Grace times the people's need equals more than enough!

Jesus comes to put an end to rivalry.

How?

By becoming himself the common enemy.

He becomes the common enemy not only of the religious and political big shots, but even of his own followers who run away, feeling afraid and betrayed.

And as he hangs from the cross, forgiving us all our hatreds and jealousies and rivalries, is that enough to pry open our tightly closed eyes, so that we might see that the source of all that exists is made up entirely of “purely gracious giving,..., with no desire to control or dominate — inviting us — God's creatures — to share in that same kind of life with one another?” -J. Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong*, 99.

When I was young, my parents used to ask the five of us kids who we thought was the favorite child.

Everyone named a different child as the favorite.

What Jesus reveals is that we are each one of us the beloved child of God, each one of us is God's favorite, and all God asks of us is to acknowledge that, and to live as if it were true — because it is true!

For if I am the apple of God's eye, what room is there for jealousy, what room is there for envy?

And if you are the apple of God's eye, what is there to control, what is there to dominate?

I know that's easier said than done.

Which is why our gospel lesson ends with Jesus walking on water — because for you and me to see each other not as rivals, but as the beloved sons and daughters of God, well, that seems as impossible as walking on water.

But here's the best part: we CAN walk on water!

Old Russian ladies walked on water the day German POWs came marching through their town.

“The pavement swarms with onlookers, cops and soldiers block the way.

The crowd of Russian women, stand, shoulders hunched from the burden of war.

Everyone of them has a loved one killed by German soldiers.

The column of those hated Germans appears.

The generals first, their arrogant demeanor meant to show their contempt for their Russian captors.

The cops and soldiers can barely hold back the furious crowds.

But then something happens.

The German grunts, the privates, the infantrymen, appear.

They hobble along, leaning on one another, the only sound is shuffling boots and thumping crutches.

An elderly woman pushes forward, touching a policeman's shoulder, saying: “Let me through.”

He steps aside.

She approaches the column, and takes from inside her coat something wrapped in a colored handkerchief.

It is a crust of black bread.

She pushes it into the pocket of a soldier, so exhausted he can barely stand.

Suddenly, from every side, women start running toward the soldiers, pushing into their hands bread, cigarettes, whatever they have.

The soldiers are no longer enemies, they are people.” -Y. Yevtushenko, *A Precocious Biography*, 26 (paraphrased).

As Russian women walk on water....

But you can walk on water not only in the drama of a world war — you can walk on water at an ordinary bus stop.

The mystic Thomas Merton remembers:

“In Louisville, Kentucky, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, I was suddenly overwhelmed by the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I was theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers.

The truth is, the whole idea of a separate existence is an illusion....

Rector's Message, continued

This sense of liberation was such a joy to me that I almost laughed out loud!

It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race!

Yes, we are dedicated to many absurdities and we make many terrible mistakes: yet, with all that, God Himself glories in becoming human.

How can I tell people that they are all walking around shining like the sun.....?!

Can anyone understand that there are no strangers.....?!

If we could only see each other as we really are, there would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed.....” -T. Merton, *Conjectures*, 140-2. (modified).

Or as Tom Long says: Marching before each human being is an angel, bellowing out:

“Make way for the image of God!

Make way for the image of God!”

How do we see each other?

Shall we be rivals — or shall we be glorious daughters and sons of the good and gracious God?

+amen



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with September birthdays!

Jayden-Aldrich Romena	9/01
Rosemary Lau, Saram Eis	9/02
Jazzy Benito	9/07
Colby Pacupac	9/08
Harrison Jong, Stephen Rowland, Hayden Randell Yee	9/09
Gretchen Jong, Tanginoa Toli	9/11
Vivian Marlow, Mathson Meyshine, Dylan-John Vinluan Daoang, Francita Kasty, Ashten Bugarin	9/12
Torrez Eis	9/15
Mylast Alexander	9/16
Alyssa Rodrigues	9/17
Helly Obeti	9/18
Kellen Ho, Khloe Leo Vinluan Daoang	9/19
Francis Nakata, Bill Eng, Esby Meyshine	9/20
Wai Wah Yee, Stuart Ching	9/21
Merlina Ballesteros	9/22
John Marlow, Viliami Lino	9/24
Raymond Au	9/26
Matthew DeCosta	9/27
Minemine Lotaki	9/28
Leyna Esaki, Pauline Gifford	9/29
Taryn Eis	9/30

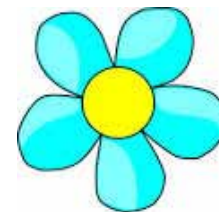
Give Aloha



**FOR ALL PLEDGING MEMBERS AND
NON-PLEDGERS TOO!!!**

It's time again for Foodland's annual ONE MONTH MATCHING FUND DRIVE in September. What does this mean, you ask? You can make your PLEDGE payment IN SEPTEMBER to Foodland (have your Maika'i card and tell the cashier **CODE 78661**) and Foodland will match a portion of what you give and send the whole kit and kaboodle to St. E's!! There is a limit of \$249 per family for this campaign.

Hold on to your receipt, drop it in the collection basket with your name on it or give it to Fr. David and we'll be sure to add whatever you gave through Foodland to your quarterly giving report. Last year St. E's was in the Top 100 of givers!





Sunday School News

Between tropical depressions and threats of hurricanes blowing our way, the Sunday School teachers opened the doors to the classrooms A, B and Shim Hall on Sunday August 23rd. Classrooms A & B had an enlightening music session with **Miss Ajaon Chen, Naomi Yuen-Schat,** and **Kama Wong** after filling out the registration forms and between the baked beans and hot dogs. Welcome to the wonderful students that eagerly trotted into the classrooms. And to the teachers who got the kids off and learning, thank you.

Classroom A (Elementary and middle school) with **Sue Yap** and **Sarah Kleinschmidt,** Classroom B (Preschoolers) with **Jamie Chock** and **Lillian Tyau,** and Shim Hall (Jr. and High School) with the Linos, **Seine** and **Viliami!**



Student registration continues through the month. Please register your children! The teachers have the registration forms.

*“First, there must be the living,
Which must lead to a giving,
Then you realize you do not yet know love!
So you re-enter the circle of living and giving.
You make steps backward,
While wanting to go forward.
(And you actually do go forward, but secretly!)
If you stay inside this circle,
It eventually creates one human life,
Which can never happen just inside the mind.
(We might call this a ‘virtuous circle’).
There is no straight line to Goodness,
to Love, or to God.
And thank God, Grace is always retroactive.”*

R. Rohr, Eager To Love, 100.





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"Last year we 'reached the world.' This year we're 'sharing and caring.'"

We Are Oceania



For nearly a year, St. E's and a group of dedicated volunteers, have worked to create a drop-in center to answer the many questions of our Micronesian friends about things like housing, jobs, insurance and legal issues. Starting August 1, a grant from the US Interior Dept is allowing this project to really take off, with paid staff and a great deal of federal and state support. At the grand opening, we were pleased to host **Esther Kia'aina**, the Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs in Washington, Justices **Michael Wilson** and **Sabrina S. McKenna**, the head of the Dept of Human Services, **Rachael Wong**, and many other dignitaries. We wish this effort much aloha and success!

Congratulations, Akiu!

We have a centenarian in our church!



The Seniors held their monthly luncheon at Wah Kung Restaurant on August 11th. **Akiu Chock** had all 4 daughters help her celebrate: **Faith, May, Ruby, and Jamie.**

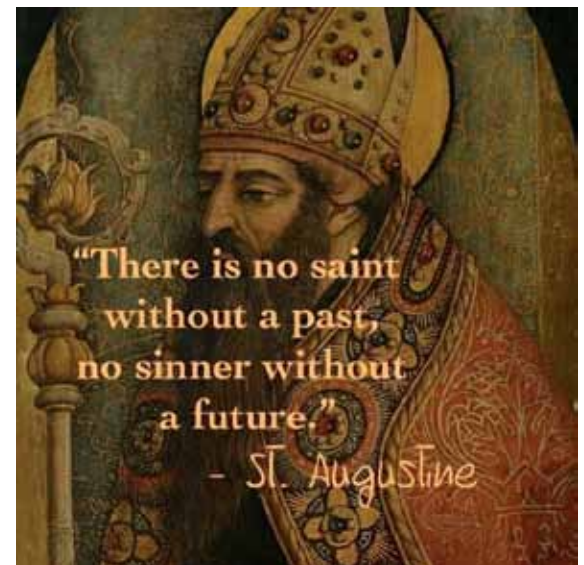


Spaghetti Dinner



Loaves and Fishes Ministry

Every Saturday from 7 am till 9 am **Fane Lino** and her gang of volunteers prepares and serves a lovely breakfast for houseless folks in the neighborhood. Many thanks to the many folks who have pitched in to make this effort a success! And if you're an early riser and would like to lend a hand, no sign up needed, no skills needed, just come on down..... and your morning will be put to great use!



Thanks to **Father David** for getting the piano into Shim Hall! But mostly thanks to **Charles Steffey** and his strong back crew who did the actual work!

And thank you **Kathy Crosier** for making those wonderful song booklets for that night. And our five ukulele strummers with **Lillian Ito**, piano extraordinaire, and **Lois Gordon's** song leading and story telling along with the beautiful voices of **Fane Lino** and sons and the sit-down hula performance by **Lani Kealoha**, and the beautiful and loudest singing ever at a spaghetti night dinner...oh my, it was musical talent night!

Kudos to the ukulele players **Lois Gordon, Jimmy Kealoha, Mary Ann Lentz, Viliami Lino** and **Fane Lino** and everybody's singing, we had a grand time that we would like to repeat!

It was wonderful to sing a song with Chuukese words given by **Ignacia Terno** and Tongan words given by **Fane Lino**.

Hana hou!!!

P.S. Orchids to **Arleen and Larry Young's** chauffeur service for **Lillian Ito** and **Lois Gordon**.



The Hawaii Foodbank, Inc.
&
Harry C. & Nee Chang C. Wong Foundation
sponsor:

The 11th Annual Hunger Walk 2015

Saturday,
September 19, 2015
Honolulu Civic Center

Check-In: 8:00 a.m.
Walk Begins: 9:00 a.m.
Program: 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Kathy Crosier's Retirement Party

Sunday, September 27, 2015
11:45 am

Hale Koa Hotel (Parking is \$5)
Buy tickets from **Roy Chee**.
Cost \$40 which includes \$5
for a gift and gratuity.

Make checks payable to Roy Chee.

11th Annual Hunger Walk

Please Come Out and Join Us!

for the **11th annual Foodbank Hunger Walk** on
Saturday, September 19
from 8:30 till noon!

This walk asks all participants to ask for sponsors to pay a few bucks per mile to support this most worthy organization. The best news though is that whatever we raise is TRIPLED back to St. E's with matching grants the Foodbank has. In short, if we collect \$1000, we will see a \$3000 credit in our Foodbank account, practically our entire annual Food Pantry Budget!! Our neighborhood kids will certainly turn out BUT THIS YEAR we're hoping our longer time members can encourage their kids and young adults (you know, our friends who are here mostly for Easter and Christmas!) to also come by and walk along with the gang!



End of Life Decisions



We hosted a free seminar for folks interested in end of life decisions. Free lawyers showed up (*nope, that is NOT an oxymoron!*) and helped folks fill out the paperwork needed to help loved ones decide what kind of end of life care each elder desired.

Thanks, Free Lawyers!



Attendance

Sunday, August 2, Eucharists & Vespers	217
Wednesday, August 5, Eucharists	43
Sunday, August 9, Eucharists & Vespers	197
Wednesday, August 12, Eucharist	21
Sunday, August 16, Eucharists & Vespers	214
Sunday, August 23 Eucharists & Vespers	197
Sunday, August 30, Eucharists & Vespers	137

Born to Eternal Life

Mrs. Polly Gifford, wife of former rector, The Rev. Dr. Gerald G. Gifford, died on June 29th. Please keep the Gifford family in your prayers.



The memorial service will be at St. Elizabeth's on Tuesday, **September 29 at 10:00 am.**



The service for **Lily Ho** will be Saturday, **September 26 at 11:00 am** at St. Elizabeth's.

"You can show your love to others by NOT wishing that they should be better Christians."

St Francis of Assisi



"About my loaves and fishes . . . could I get a receipt for tax purposes?"