

*"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 2014 **At the Intersection of Heaven and Earth**

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*By The Rev. David J. Gierlach*

"A big tough Samurai once went to see a little monk.

"Monk," he says, in a voice accustomed to instant obedience, "teach me about heaven and hell!"

The monk looks up at this mighty warrior and replies with utter distain,

"Teach you about heaven and hell!

I can't teach you about anything.

You're dirty.

You smell.

Your blade is rusty.

You're a disgrace, an embarrassment to the Samurai class.

Get out of my sight.

I can't stand you!"

The Samurai is furious.

He shakes, gets all red in the face, he is speechless with rage.

He pulls out his sword and raises it, ready to strike the monk.

"That's hell," says the monk softly.

The Samurai is overwhelmed by the compassion and surrender of this little man who has offered his life to give this teaching, to show him hell!

He slowly puts down his sword..... he feels filled with gratitude and peace.

"And that's heaven," says the monk." Kurtz, *Experiencing Spirituality*, 35-6.

I like this story, especially today, because some see today's gospel lesson as a time when Jesus hands over power and authority to Peter, meaning it will be up to Peter and those who follow him to make up the rules for this new church, to set the boundaries as to who's in and who's out, to be, in other words, the gatekeeper of all things related to God.

Not only is this reading the basis for the Roman and Anglican Churches insistence on the power of apostolic succession, but there's a million jokes that have St. Peter himself standing at heaven's gate giving a thumbs up or a thumbs down to every soul who finds herself in the next life.

Even Archbishop Tutu got in the act this week during his visit with us in Honolulu; telling the story of Nelson Mandela arriving at heaven's gate as St. Peter hustles out to greet him with cellphone in hand so he can take a selfie with Mr. Mandela!

But in fact, I'm not so sure that that's what going on today.

Instead, I think what Jesus is up to is a lot closer to that little monk teaching the

Samurai about heaven and hell than dubbing Peter the first CEO in Christ's church.

The first hint of that is where Jesus decides to ask the question that he asks today:



# Rector's Message, continued

“who do people, . . . . ., who do you, say that I am?”

They are in the town of Caesarea Phillipi, about as far as you can get from Nazareth and still be in Israel.

And what's so special about Caesarea-Phillipi, you ask?

Well, it's where Herod has built great monuments to Rome and to Caesar, and later Herod's son will even rename the whole city simply Caesarea.

It's as if Jesus takes the disciples to the Pentagon, or to Tiananmen Square or to the Kremlin.

He's got them in a place where the powers of our best human thinking are on full and proud display: thinking that says “we better look out for number one,” thinking that says “might makes right,” thinking that says “avoid death at all costs.”

These are the rules we live by.

Peter knows these rules very well.

And yet Peter, standing there at the intersection between Jesus and Caesar, at the intersection between heaven's ways and the ways of earth, Peter is given the great gift of insight into who and what Jesus is.

And while it will take some time for him to grasp the totality of this insight, what he will eventually come to see is that “Caesar isn't Lord, Jesus is.

Putin is not the Son of God, Jesus is.

The Economy is not the authority under which we must organize our lives; Jesus is.

Jesus isn't inviting us into a religion that is a cheerleader for America's kingdom;

Jesus is inviting us into an entirely new kingdom.” McClaren, paraphrased.

And there is even more that Peter will eventually come to see; after he denies Jesus, after he deserts Jesus, after he discovers the empty tomb, after he is restored by Jesus at that barbecue on the beach following the resurrection; he will learn that these things are true:

“Violence cannot defeat violence.

Hate cannot defeat hate.

Fear cannot defeat fear.

God's way is different.

God achieves victory through defeat, glory through shame, strength through weakness, leadership through serving, life through death.

And God invites all who claim Jesus as their Lord to walk this same path.

Certainly this upside down way caused Peter great consternation.

It causes us all great consternation.

It's not the kind of change in one's point of view that happens quickly or easily.” McClaren, paraphrased.

Not for Peter.

Not for us.

But with the challenge to take up this new way comes a new kind of power.

Jesus says today that what we bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and what we loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

We last heard these words at Pentecost, when Jesus gives to us the power to bind and loose sins.

And as we discovered at Pentecost, we can only truly exercise that power if our standpoint is on the solid rock of forgiveness; only with the heart of forgiveness can we distinguish the good from the bad and the ugly.

Just so today, when Jesus speaks of the power to bind and loose; talking not about sins, but about the rules and regulations and traditions of the faith community.

Just as Jesus reinterprets the rules and regulations and traditions of the faith community not through rigid legalisms but through the eyes of human need, through the eyes of compassion, by healing on the sabbath and eating with notorious sinners and forgiving sins freely, so he instructs us to do likewise.

It seems what Jesus is telling us is that

# Rector's Message, continued

no church rule or regulation is unchangeable because the living God remains with us and for us and among us every single day.

And because the power of the living God is here in our midst, always and for all time, all rules and regulations and traditions are subject to change if that change serves human need, if the change serves human compassion: so today we ordain women into the clergy, we ordain people of different sexual orientations, we open our doors to people of all places and races and social classes, because we are recipients of the great power to bind and loose when mercy and compassion and kindness are served by such changes.

Today we stand with the apostles, we stand with that little monk and the giant Samurai, at the intersection between heaven and earth.

It is precisely at that intersection where we Christians are called to live, each and every day.

And as we stand in that place, the question asked every day of me, and of you, is this:

Shall we confront the needs of our world with violence and insults and rage; or shall we confront the needs of our world with quiet words of understanding, with warm gestures of compassion, with gratitude and surrender?

+amen

## Give Aloha



### FOR ALL PLEDGING MEMBERS AND NON-PLDGERS 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!



## Happy Birthday

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

Jayden-Aldrich Romena	9/1
Rosemary Lau	9/2
Jazzy Benito	9/7
Colby Pacupac	9/8
Harrison Jong	9/9
Stephen Rowland	9/9
Hayden Randell Yee	9/9
Gretchen Jong	9/11
Tanginoa Toli	9/11
Vivian Marlow	9/12
Mathson Meyshine	9/12
Dylan-John Vinluan Daoang	9/12
Francita Kasty	9/12
Ashten Bugarin	9/12
Mylast Alexander	9/16
Alyssa Rodrigues	9/17
Helly Obeti	9/18
Kellen Ho	9/19
Khloe Leo Vinluan Daoang	9/19
Francis Nakata	9/20
Bill Eng	9/20
Esby Meyshine	9/20
Wai Wah Yee	9/21
Stuart Ching	9/21
Merlina Ballesteros	9/22
John Marlow	9/24
Viliami Lino	9/24
Raymond Au	9/26
Matthew DeCosta	9/27
Minemine Lotaki	9/28
Pauline Gifford	9/29
Leyna Esaki	9/29

# Service of Witness and Prayer

at the Waianae Boat Harbor



## Sunday School News

Thank you to all for your support and help with getting the Sunday School children off to a great school year with new back packs and school supplies! And thanks to our Young People — **Viliami Lino, James Fitzpatrick, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Leyna Esaki** and crew for the distribution to the kids!

It's always exciting to start a new school year. Likewise, in Sunday School, the classrooms opened on August 24th. New faces and familiar ones, kids sporting new hairdos, glasses, bright smiles... thank you all for your support! There were 39 students who registered with the Sunday school. 7 in the preschool-primary class; 17 in the elementary class; 15 in the middle and high school class

The teachers, **Jamie Chock, Lillian Tyau, Sue Yap, Sarah Kleinschmidt, Fane Lino** and **James Fitzpatrick** eagerly opened their classroom doors to the bright smiling faces! The curriculum we will be starting is very user friendly, we are open to more help. Thanks also to **Heather Manning** who will help once a month in Classroom B and to **Ajaon Chen** and **Viliami Lino** who will work with the music program once a month.

We look forward to an exciting school year studying the gospel readings and hearing the stories shared in the Old Testament.

*The outstretched arms of Jesus exclude no one, not the drunk in the doorway, the panhandler on the street, the most selfish and ungrateful in their cocoons, the most unjust of employers and the most overbearing of snobs. The love of Christ embraces all without exception. —Brennan Manning*

## Sunday School Rules!



# Wedding of the Decade!



Congratulations to **Jerek Jong** and his lovely bride, **Bonnie Lu**, on their marriage on August 17th. Proud parents are **Gretchen and Harrison Jong** and **Mr. and Mrs. Lu**.



The wedding party: **Joel Jong, Douglas Ing, Jerek Jong, Bonnie Lu, Skye Goo Darnell**, and Raina Goo.

Many thanks to all of you who donated to our annual Back To School Supply Drive!! This year we were able to equip over 200 children with the basics needed to excel in school, what with everything from backpacks and binders to pencils and correcto-tape. A great job by our Youth Crew for organizing this wonderful task, and doing so with the efficiency of pros!

Pictured at left are the bride and groom and below the groom and his mom, **Gretchen Jong**. Congratulations and best wishes to you both!



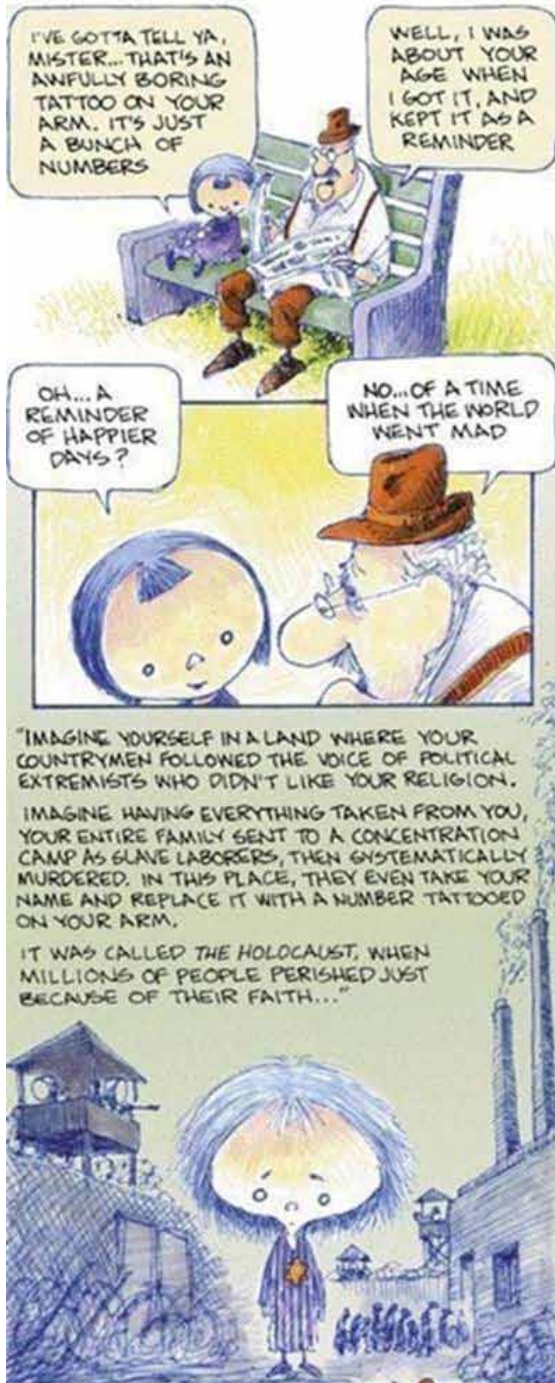
## Spaghetti Night and Sing-Along

What a night with Gretchen Jong and the original Andrews Sisters belting out tunes that young and old know by heart. What with ukulele strumming and hands clapping, it really was a great time. The food wasn't so bad either!

Uncle Alii's famous sauce combined with brother Charlie's southern fried chicken (REALLY SOUTHERN, all the way from CHUUK!) and Chef Ricardo's scrumptious potato salad, why there was hardly room for all the salads, fruits and ice cream!

Last Spaghetti Nite coming up the last Friday of September. Hope to see you there!!

## NON SEQUITUR BY WILEY



*A spiritual love is born of sorrow. For men love one another with a spiritual love only when they have suffered the same sorrow together, when through long days they have ploughed the stony ground buried beneath the common yoke of a common grief. It is then that they know one another in their common anguish, and thus they pity one another. For to love is to pity; and if bodies are united by pleasure, souls are united by pain. —Miguel de Unamuno*

## Never Forget

It is now 68 years after the Second World War in Europe ended. This message is in memory of the six million Jews, 20 million Russians, 10 million Christians and 1,900 Catholic priests who were murdered, massacred, raped, burned, starved and humiliated with the rest of the world looking the other way.

Now, more than ever, with Iraq, Iran, and the looney tunes called ISIS claiming the Holocaust to be “a myth,” it’s imperative to make sure the world never forgets, because there are those who would like to do it again.



## Monthly Medical March

The Monthly March For Medical Mercy, every month, last Thursday of the month, leaving St. E’s at 10 am sharp, is having its desired effect. Our congressional reps are very engaged in this issue, with Senator Hirono organizing scads of meetings between DC bigwigs, local officials and leaders in the Micronesian community to fix the pending disaster that loss of full medical benefits will bring. Why do this some ask? Well, for starters, our nation has done a number on the waters and lands of these our friends, what with scores of nukes blasting radiation all over, moving folks from ancestral lands, and turning a subsistence diet of fish and greens into spam and rice.... Not to mention the carte blanche (that’s French for something) our military has each and every day in their homeland. Why do this? Because it needs to be done and it’s the right thing to do.



## Attendance

Sunday, August 3	224
Wednesday, August 5	19
Sunday, August 10	174
Wednesday, August 12	11
Sunday, August 17	188
Wednesday, August 19	19
Sunday, August 24	206
Wednesday, August 27	18
Sunday, August 31	196

## This is what it means

to seek God perfectly:

to withdraw

from illusion and pleasure,

from worldly anxieties and desires.

from the works that God does not want,

from a glory that is only human display,

to keep my mind free from confusion in

order that

liberty may be always at the disposal of his

will;

to entertain silence in my heart and listen for

the voice.

And then to wait in peace and emptiness and oblivion of all things.

Thomas Merton, *A Book of Hours*, 149.

## The Joys of Aging

Don Parker was interviewing a 94 year old man in Port Washington, New York, as part of an American Civil Liberties Union and history project.

At one point, Parker asked him: At this time in your life, what gives you the most satisfaction?

The 94 year old man thought a moment, then responded: No peer pressure.

—E. Kurtz, *Experiencing Spirituality*, 66.

## Happy Birthday!



Happy Birthday to **Akiu Chock** who was 99 years young on August 11th! (she's sitting down because she just finished bowling.....)



## Food Voucher for Farmers Market



On August 21 we hosted the **FOODBANK** Farmers' Market Voucher Program, with over 500 elderly on low incomes stopping by for a **FIFTY DOLLAR** voucher to be used at any of the many Farmers' Markets on Oahu —a win for the elderly poor and the hard working farmers



## Rest In Peace, Carl Crosier

Our friend and Kathy's husband of 37 years, after many months of valiant struggle with cancer, died on Thursday, August 28, 2014 at the St. Francis Hospice, with Kathy and Carl's sister, Carol, at his side.



Carl will be always remembered as a fine man with enormous talent that spanned music, finance and cooking.

He gave generously to us here at St. E's with his time and talent, and although he fulfilled a lifelong dream by being received into the Roman Catholic church just over a month ago, we will always have him in our hearts as an honorary Anglican!



## Wine Tasting and Silent Auction

*It's baaaaaaaaaack!* A few years ago, through the generosity of our friend **Michael Hopkins**, we had a spectacular **Taste of St. Elizabeth** which included *maaaaaabvalous* appetizers, a great silent auction with really cool stuff and over one hundred different wines from all over the world to sip on.

Well, we're gonna do it again! **Saturday, December 13**, here at the church, stay tuned for more details!