

"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

August 2011

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V Bishop of Hawaii

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Busted Hips

The Reverend David J. Gierlach

Today's reading from Genesis, the story of Jacob that we've been hearing these last several weeks, comes to roost on what happens when anyone, you, me or Jacob, makes the move from trusting in ourselves to trusting in God.

Jacob is one of the great figures in history.

And, if you didn't know you were hearing it from the Bible, you might think the story of Jacob came from Norman Mailer or Jackie Collins or some other author who specializes in the nasty side of life.

Here's Jacob, right from the womb, grabbing on to his brother's heel, trying, but failing to be the first born in a culture where being first means everything.

Failing that, he takes advantage of older brother's hunger by making him trade his birth right, his right to the blessing of Isaac, the blessing that is an irrevocable gift of all Isaac had; Jacob got Esau to trade it in for a hot bowl of chili and rice.

Jacob is one smart cookie.

And it doesn't end there.

When Isaac grows old and blind, sitting at death's door, Jacob gets dressed in some skins (to be hairy like older brother), creeps into Isaac's dark, cool tent, and fools dear old dad into giving the inheritance, the blessing, the irrevocable gift of all Isaac had, to Jacob.

Once given, it cannot be taken back.

Once given, it cannot be given again.

Understandably, Esau is furious when he finds out what happens, and even furioser when he learns that what is done cannot and

will not be undone.

So Jacob leaves town. He's gone a long while.

It's during his return, many years later, that brings us to the passage we hear today.

Up til now, Jacob has managed quite well on his own.

With cunning and skill he, not Esau, got the great blessing.

With perseverance and sweat, after 14 years of work, he finally gets the beautiful, shapely, sweet natured Rachel as his wife.

But today, something changes.

Tonight, as he sleeps, something rouses Jacob.

Is it a demon?

Or an angel?

Is it a man or is it God?

We don't know.

The story suggests it might be any of them.

What we do know is that Jacob is no longer patting himself on the back for the good fortune his life has brought.

Now, he is grappling, wrestling with, what?

A demon?

An angel?

A man?

God?

The wrestling goes on the whole night long, ending, it seems, in a tie.

Exhausted, but undefeated, Jacob, whose name means "go-getter" in English, is now given the new name of "Israel," or "the one who wrestles with God."

But not only that.



Rector's Message, cont.

When Moses received the law on Mount Sinai, he watched as God passed by him, seeing only God's back, for to see God face to face is to die.

Yet, here is Jacob, having fought with this stranger the whole night long, having his hip knocked out of joint for the rest of his life, only, in the end, in the very midst of struggle and pain and injury: Jacob sees God face to face: and lives!

Which got me thinking about our community right here; and the many times we are given the grace to see God face to face.

I see the face of God in Auntie N's wonderful humor always poking fun at herself: like her story of her wireless phones that, one after another, with only a few days use, kept dying! She called her dear friend P and told her of the problem. P asked: "N, did you charge them?" To which N replied, "Why no, I paid cash." It took P half an hour to get off the floor from laughing...

I see the face of God in our concerned, and sometimes contentious friends, in the quiet service of the C sisters, in the vigilant eye of our property guys, in the dedication of you old timers who have brought St E's to where it is today.

But I also see the face of God in some of our toughest neighborhood boys, who come from homes and lives that barely teach a reason to hope, to dream. I see the face of God in the gold toothed smiles of our newest members, folks just trying to figure out how to get by from day to day.

Someone remarked this week that our newest members need to change to become more like us. After all, when in Rome, do as the Romans do.

There is some truth to that.

But, the "Rome" we are all invited to live in is the Kingdom of God; and we are ALL called to change to look more like citizens of that far country.

The earliest church lived with these same struggles.

Paul wasn't joking when he declared that the whole of creation groans in expectation for the full revealing of the Kingdom; groaning because the birth pangs of a new creation ARE painful, ARE difficult, and do require much from each of us.

Ours is a wild, untamed God.

Ours is a God content to live with weeds and wheat growing up side by side; who appears sometimes as the gentlest breeze, and sometimes as our fiercest foe.

Jacob's story is our story too.

For in his struggle, and out of his pain, Jacob makes the fundamental exchange by trading in a lifetime of trusting in himself to the terrifying bargain of trusting in God.

And his reward is NOT more good fortune, his reward is a busted hip.

You see, when we move from relying on number one to relying on God, expect pain.

Expect bad stuff (bad stuff from our point of view, anyway) to happen.

I can't tell you why that is so.

All I know is it's true.

Just before I left on vacation two weeks ago, one of our members got in touch and said he'd been reading the daily lesson in his Forward Movement booklet. It seems in the reading that day, God had sent an evil spirit into King Saul.

Our member wrote (and I share this with permission):

"1 Samuel 18:5-16 is the recommended reading in today's Forward Movement of which my conundrum is based. Verse 10 of the cited reference reads as follows: "The next day an **evil spirit from God** suddenly came into Saul..." My understanding of the church's teaching is that there is no evil in God and I believe that fervently; the question in my mind becomes why does this and other passages in the Book of Samuel attribute the evil spirit emanating from God? Very puzzling; if there are reasonable explanations please share with me?"

And I thought of Jacob and his busted hip.

And I thought of our lives and times here at St. E's.

Ours is a God who gets down in the muck with us, who wrestles with us, who won't hesitate to knock us around so that we might wake up to see that God is far more mysterious, far stranger, far more challenging than we usually dare to believe.

Ours is a God who rejects our efforts to keep God small, who rejects our constant efforts to keep God understandable, manageable, under control.

One poet describes what Jacob sees in the face of his opponent that night "as something more terrible than the face of death – it is the face of love. It is vast and strong, half ruined with suffering and fierce with joy, the face a man flees down all the

Rector's Message, cont.

darkness of his days..." Buechner, *Secrets in the Dark*, 7.

Until this encounter, Jacob got what he wanted through cunning and shrewdness.

Until this encounter, he got what he needed by his own wits and skills.

Yet in his struggle with this demon, this man, with God, he pitched a great battle all night long, fighting to what seemed like a draw, which, if you're wrestling with God, is a heck of an achievement.

But as day draws near, the stranger simply touches the socket of his hip, and Jacob is finished.

His grip changes from one of combatant, relying on his own strength, wits, and savvy, to the grip of a drowning man, clinging for all he's worth to the only one who can save him: "Give me your blessing," he cries, in other words: "All that I am now depends on you."

In other words: "I surrender."

He didn't get there without the busted hip, and neither shall we.

Sometimes it takes what seems to be an evil thing so you and I can come to accept that while power or success or happiness, as the world knows them, belong to he who will fight for them; peace, love, joy, these are only from God. Id.

They are pure gift, which can be received only when the fist clenched for the fight is opened into the hand willing to receive.

Amen+

Go, Team St. Elizabeth's — Rah!



Bulletin Bloopers

We are grateful for the help of those who cleaned up the grounds around the church building and the rector.

"For health and strength and daily feud, we give you thanks O God."



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with August birthdays!

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Renza Farek | 8/2 |
| Sue Yap | 8/4 |
| Pablo Venenciano | 8/4 |
| Nicholas Chung | 8/5 |
| Wayne Pacupac | 8/6 |
| Raymond Leong | 8/8 |
| Maxwell Starkman | 8/9 |
| Akiu Chock | 8/11 |
| David Hirashiki | 8/13 |
| Linda Woo | 8/13 |
| Elyjah-Dane Badua | 8/13 |
| Mari Love Sos | 8/14 |
| Etta Leong | 8/15 |
| Kenneth Ho | 8/16 |
| Simter Robert | 8/16 |
| Jo Ann Young | 8/17 |
| Harold Ware | 8/17 |
| Keith Ho | 8/17 |
| Reden Ho | 8/18 |
| Patsy Ann Ching | 8/18 |
| Douglas In | 8/18 |
| Kaitlin Nagamine | 8/18 |
| Karen Batangan | 8/19 |
| Caren Esaki | 8/20 |
| Pedro Timonio | 8/20 |
| Marietta Ware | 8/20 |
| Joel Jong | 8/21 |
| Nancy Au | 8/21 |
| Francis Kau | 8/21 |
| Joshua Lino | 8/22 |
| Jaden Morey | 8/22 |
| Jeferrson Noket | 8/22 |
| Madleen Michael | 8/24 |
| Jarrett Young | 8/25 |
| Illuminada Padasdao | 8/25 |
| Inaria Repaky | 8/25 |



Thank you, Nancy!

How can we possibly ever express our appreciation and thanks to **Nancy Shim-Au**, who in July announced her retirement from Esther's Kitchen? There has not been a single event at St. Elizabeth's which has not been touched by her generous hand — work days, potlucks, holiday luncheons, you name it — Nancy has worked tirelessly in the kitchen and provided food and happiness to literally thousands of people.



For years, Nancy has provided a light lunch (a Nancy Au "*light lunch*" consists of 7 courses, 5 desserts and numerous drinks!) for the volunteers who prepare the monthly *Vine and Branches* newsletter for mailing. Here's the cake that was served on that last meal. **We love you, Nancy!**

The Children's Garden

by Jamie Chock

In early September 2010, **Jamie Chock** started a crop of tender beans for the Preschool to Second Grade class, because the neighborhood children live in apartment complexes and have no idea about how plants are grown. The children started their own garden by growing bean seeds in the classroom, watching the seedlings being transferred to dirt and continuing to grow.

The first crop produced 102 beans, the second crop yield was 149 beans, and the third crop yield produced 139 beans.

The garden provides lessons about science, agriculture, the weather, literacy, math, literature, art, cooking, nutrition, vocabulary, sensory skills, and culture — but much more than that —nurturing and spirituality.

What did the children say after tasting the cooked beans?

"I like it without salt."

"The beans look like the ones in the store."

"I don't know how my mommy cooked my beans."

A special "thank you and mahalo" to **May Chock** for helping to plant the bean seeds for the second crop.



Quotable Quotes

“For Christians are Christians only when we unceasingly ask critical questions of the society in which we live and continuously stress the necessity of conversion, not only of the individual, but of the world. Christians are Christians only when we refuse to allow ourselves or anyone else to settle into a comfortable rest. We remain dissatisfied with the status quo.” Henri Nouwen, *Show Me The Way*, 71.

“Save me from my own, private, poisonous urge to change everything, to act without reason, to move for movement’s sake, to unsettle everything You have ordained. Let me rest in Your will and be silent. Then the light of Your joy will warm my life. Its fire will burn in my heart and shine for Your glory. This is what I live for. Amen, amen.” T. Merton, *The Book of Hours*, 98.

Chapel Doors Blessed

The new chapel doors which replaced the old weather-beaten and termite-infested doors were blessed on June 26th. The doors were given in memory of **Dr. Steven Tyau**. One door was given by Herman Auyong, Wilma Tyau Chang, Jennie Lum, Audrey Tyau Tam, David Tyau, Gaylore Tyau, Malcolm Tyau, Norman Tyau, Wilfred Tyau and Elaine Young. The other door was given by Elaine Auyong Young, Dr. Donovan W. C. K. Young and Michael H. C. W. Young. Thank you all for your generosity!



“What action shall I perform to attain God?” the seeker asked.
“To attain God,” the elder replied, there are two things you must know. The first is that all efforts to attain God are of no avail.”
“And the second?” the seeker asked.
“You must act as if you did not know the first,” the elder said.

Anthony D Mello, SJ



Youth Car Wash

The Youth of St. Elizabeth’s recently held their car wash to raise funds for basketball shoes. **James Fitzpatrick**, summer intern, was amazed that the project actually turned out clean cars! *Oh, James, ye of little faith!*

Between the car wash and two anonymous donations, we have enough money for the right shoes!



Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain.

(source unknown)



Attendance

| | | |
|------|------------------------|-----|
| 7/3 | Sunday 8:15 | 139 |
| 7/3 | Ilokano Service | 35 |
| 7/7 | Wed. Healing Eucharist | 31 |
| 7/7 | Wed. Ilokano Service | 33 |
| 7/10 | Sunday 8:15 am | 130 |
| 7/10 | Chinese Service | 4 |
| 7/13 | Wed. Healing Eucharist | 23 |
| 7/17 | Sunday 8:15 am | 122 |
| 7/17 | Chinese Service | 5 |
| 7/20 | Wed. Healing Eucharist | 21 |
| 7/24 | Sunday 8:15 am | 131 |
| 7/24 | Chinese Service | 4 |
| 7/27 | Wed. Healing Eucharist | 29 |



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St. Elizabeth's a historic building

by Stuart Ching

In my new position as Education Program Manager at Historic Hawaii Foundation, I am planning a symposium on Hawaii Modernism. I was reviewing a draft of the context study (not yet published) which defines Hawaii Modernism and identifies significant structures erected in the mid-20th century. To my surprise there were photos and a mention of St. Elizabeth's! The architect of the building was Edwin Bauer which I did not know. How about that? What we take for granted, others find significant. The study stated that St. Elizabeth's was an example of "Modern Gothic" and that it was the first air-conditioned house of worship in Hawaii (we all knew that).

I am glad we went through the trouble and expense of recreating the Chapel doors as originally designed. This helped preserve the architectural integrity of the building as originally envisioned by the architect.

Besides the architecture of the building, we should be very proud that we have one of only two documented Tiffany stained glass church windows in Hawaii. The Diocesan Archives received yet another request for information about the Tiffany window from someone on the mainland. We should start doing bus tours to raise money!



Religious ritual is a way of putting jumper cables on people's souls. —Rabbi Hillel Goelman

Opening to the Graces of Transfiguration:

An Introductory Workshop Dealing with Kundalini Energies within a Christian/Western Framework

This workshop is designed for those who have had a kundalini experience, and/or those who want to know about working with kundalini energy from a Western perspective.

Features:

The Intuitive Heart Meditation™

Questions & Discussion: Personal Reflections on the Meditation

Focus Presentation:
Working With Kundalini Energies through Intuition and Inner Guidance

Sharing of Personal Kundalini Experiences

Intentionally Directed Intuitive Heart Meditation™

Sharing and Discussion of the 2nd Meditation



Location: St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church, 720 North King St., Honolulu

Date: Monday, Aug 22, 2011

Time: 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Place: Church Conference Room

Cost: \$50.00, cash, or check

To Enroll & Learn More about Course:

Phone: 808-457-9753

Email:

fran_kramer@healingdreamgarden.com

Benefits:

Learn about:

1. Kundalini's diverse and complex clearing energies resulting in strange sensations, pains, bodily reactions, etc.
2. The art of letting go and allowing the energy to work its purpose.
3. The importance of developing and relying on intuition and interior guidance to understand the energy, changes and symptoms occurring physically, mentally and spiritually,
4. The role of the imagination as it is used actively and passively in tapping into intuition and inner guidance.

Experience:

The Intuitive Heart™ meditation designed to teach the art of letting go, and to prepare the heart to receive intuitive guidance.

Fran Kramer, MA Workshop Leader



Fran Kramer is a life coach, writer, educator, and artist whose passion is using dreams and intuition to create and problem solve while exploring the many facets of kundalini energy, health and wellness. In 2007 she experienced a strong kundalini awakening, and since then has been working with the energy. She is an Intuitive Heart instructor certified by the Edgar Cayce Institute for Intuitive Studies. Her graduate degree is in Asian Studies (Religion & Philosophy) and she has many years of teaching experience in academic, corporate, hospital, and community settings.

St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
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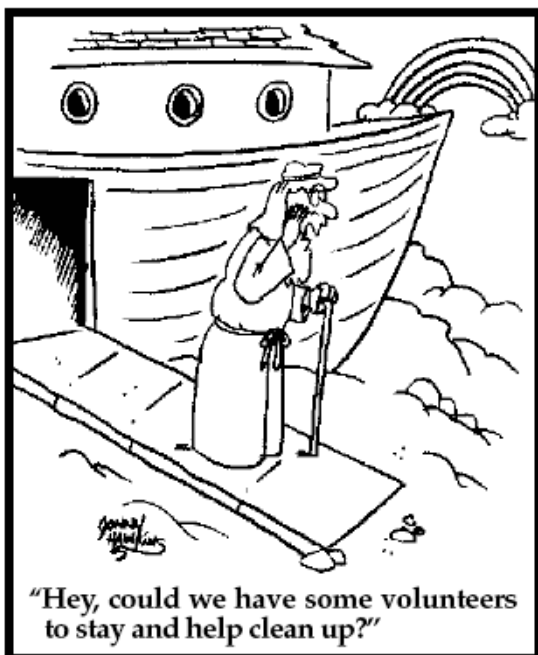
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A House of Prayer for all People

Return service requested

**For over 100 years,
members have remembered
St. E's in their wills.
Please do the same so our
ministry can continue
for another 100 years.**

*"That's our Lord's will, that
our prayers and our trust be alike:
large. —Julian of Norwich.*



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How to Pray

Lectio Divina. This classical prayer form focuses for a half hour or more on one passage of scripture. Read the passage four times. First, read it in a leisurely way, listening for a particular word or phrase that captures your attention. Then, read the passage again, listening for something specifically for you. The third time, read prayerfully and allow the passage to challenge you. Finally, read it a fourth time, holding your word or phrase in mind and resting in the Spirit. (From Forward Movement's pamphlet *Ten Ways To Pray*, p. 2). Consider using these passages from Holy Scripture: Genesis 50:17-22; Corinthians 12:21-22; 1 Kings 19:11-13.

A St. Elizabeth's Choir?

Do you love to sing in the shower, in the car, in your head? How about joining the choir? We are forming a **St. Elizabeth's Choir** — no experience necessary, all languages welcome! Sign up on the clipboard.

