

"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

January 2013

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V Bishop of Hawaii

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Rector

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Priest Associate

The Reverend Dr.
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Rector Emeritus

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Scandal – A Sermon for Christmas Eve

The Rev. David J. Gierlach, Rector

Tonight we come together at the intersection of two scandals.

Humanity's scandal seems to be older than history.

It is our love affair with violence; our undying faith that one more war, only a few more guns, just a bit more in the defense budget, and all will be well.

Our love affair with violence appears to be rooted in our conviction that we live in a cold and impersonal universe, and if we don't protect ourselves, our loved ones, our nation; no one else will.

Our love affair with violence appears to be rooted in the conviction that death has the last word, and that God, if God exists, is far away indeed and generally indifferent to human needs.

We may hope for better days, but in the day to day, it is dog eat dog.

Such is the scandal of humanity.

It leads us to ever-greater isolation from one another, to ever-greater distrust of others' motives, to an ever-greater sense that when all is said and done, we are truly alone.

And yet, in the midst of humanity's scandal, something invades, something quiet and hard to detect, something that is, nevertheless, powerful and insistent.

Call it the scandal of God.

It is that scandal that we come to celebrate tonight.

It includes the scandal of a pregnant, unwed, Middle Eastern teenager – a condition that according to the rules and regulations of the day should have seen her

stoned to death.

It is the scandal of the genealogy of the child she gives birth to this night.

The ancestors of great men ought to be great men.

But not when you begin poking around in the scandal of God.

The genealogy of this child is full, not of great men, but of remarkable women; remarkable not because of their virtue, but because of their ingenuity.

And so Tamar, married to the eldest son of Judah, finds her husband has died.

She is given her husband's brother in marriage, as is the custom and as is her right, only to soon find him dead too.

The third son is young, but is promised to her.

Alas, the promise is never kept.

Her father-in-law, Judah, doesn't want to risk son number three.

So Tamar dresses up as a prostitute, and intercepts Judah on his way to a fishing weekend with his pals.

In promise of payment, Judah leaves with her his wallet and fishing license (actually his seal and staff, but you get the idea).

Months pass, it's discovered Tamar is pregnant.

Like Mary should have been, Judah orders Tamar to be stoned; until she sends out his wallet and license establishing who the father really is.

Give Judah credit, he acknowledges the pregnancy, apologizes for withholding son number three, and one of the twins born of this unholy union becomes the great



Rector's Message, continued

grandfather of the greatest king known to Israel, King David.

As if that isn't enough scandal for one family tree, there is more.

There's Ramah, a woman surviving by prostitution, who uses her trade to seduce and kill an enemy general, allowing the Jewish people to take control of Israel.

Then there is Bathsheba; the gorgeous knockout whose bathtub stands on the rooftop of her condominium.

Funny thing, the condo roof is right next door to the Temple, where King David lives, and he has a bird's eye view of this gal in all her naked splendor.

The only problem: she's married to a soldier.

A small thing though if you're the king: the commander in chief.

In come the orders: send her husband to Helmut Province, to the front lines, where the expected happens, and David now takes the new widow into his arms for keeps.

From that scandal-filled union comes King Solomon, the wisest king in Israel's history.

Now you may be asking, or fuming, why is he going on and on about scandal when what I came for tonight was a warm and fuzzy story of a newborn and angels and a happy new mom?

Well, I'll tell you why.

We live in days where innocents are slaughtered, whether by Herod's orders to wipe out all boys under two years of age – as Herod seeks to destroy the child born tonight, or whether by deranged teenagers who come to school classrooms armed to the teeth with only massacre on their minds.

At times like these, we can come to night's like this, and try to forget the carnage.

But if we do, we end up worshipping a god that is not the Creator of the universe, but a sentimental fairy tale, a creation of the Hallmark card industry.

Or we can go deep, asking for the grace to experience the true God who is the ground of all being; who is that in which we all of us live and move and have our being.

The true God, who rejects violence, taking suffering onto himself; and commanding we his followers to do the same.

The true God, who calls on us to give to the undeserving; to forgive the unforgivable; to love not only our neighbor, but our enemy as well.

It is at the intersection of humanity's scandal and God's scandal, that God is with us, if only we have the eyes to see, the ears to hear.

Emmanu-el: With us, God.

This is whom we come to worship this night.

Emmanu-el: With us, God.

And so the question to you this night: Are you alone: or do you live within the heart of God?

A friend tells this story recalling as a youngster in very rural Texas, following her mom home one very dark night, carrying water from a well that was far from her home.

It happened during that long walk home.

The only light is from the luminous glow of the Milky Way.

Her mom is in a hurry, walking fast, up ahead, and, suddenly, the girl is all alone.

She is frightened.

She feels utterly alone.

Then, she begins to get angry.

Angry at her mom for leaving her.

Angry at God for allowing it.

She starts to ask: "Where is God?"

She starts to ask if there even is a God.

Or is she, in the end, truly alone in the world?

And then, in the midst of all this loneliness, as she walks, lost and scared, the sky above her reaches down with something like arms, embracing her, and with something like a voice, whispers: "You are not alone."

Emmanu-el: With us, God.

While we busy ourselves pretending we are all alone in the world, God busies himself with getting every last one of us right with God: Tamar and Judah, David and Bathsheba, even that young man in Newtown, even the Taliban, even you and me.

In the midst of every kind of scandal, it seems, God finds a way in, and heals it and sanctifies it, and redeems it.

"By the mystery of the birth that we celebrate this night, the intersection of humanity's scandal with God's scandal, God cancels all tests and gives everyone – and all of us – an A+.

In the mystery of Christ's death, God drops all the rotten works of the

Rector's Message

whole world down the black hole of his own forgetting; and in the mystery of the resurrection, God sees to it that death doesn't have the last word — no — God makes a new world in which we're all home free."

Capon, *The Mystery of Christ*, 104 (paraphrased/modified).

Can you swallow that tonight?

And if you can, can you pass it on?

Can you live it, this scandal, who is born to us this night?

amen+

In Memoriam

January 8 marks the one year anniversary of the death of our beloved friend, priest, missionary, husband and dad; **Saimone Lino.**



During his five years in Hawai'i, Saimone touched hundreds of lives, including Micronesian boys badly needing a father figure; transplanted folks from Aotearoa/New Zealand, and the Tongan community. His death continues to be felt by so many of us.

Please continue to keep Fane, Anaseini, Viliami and Joshua in your prayers, as they continue the Lino Family Ministry within the Diocese of Hawaii. And may our friend continue to move from glory to glory in the nearer presence of God. Amen.

"You are never too old to set another goal, or to dream a new dream." —CS Lewis

"Holding on to anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die."

—Buddha

Between two thieves

An old preacher was dying. He sent a message for his banker and his lawyer, both church members, to come to his home.

When they arrived, they were ushered up to his bedroom. As they entered the room, the preacher held out his hands and motioned for them to sit on each side of the bed. The preacher grasped their hands, sighed contentedly, smiled, and stared at the ceiling.

For a time, no one said anything. Both the banker and lawyer were touched and flattered that the preacher would ask them to be with him during his final moments. They were also puzzled; the preacher had never given them any indication that he particularly liked either of them. They both remembered his many long, uncomfortable sermons about greed, covetousness, and avaricious behavior that made them squirm in their seats.

Finally, the banker said, "Preacher, why did you ask us to come?"

The old preacher mustered up his strength and then said weakly, "Jesus died between two thieves, and that's how I want to go."

Chapel Doors



Francis Kau gives advice and encouragement as David Kleinschmidt restores the chapel doors.



Children's Christmas Party

The annual Christmas party, Dec. 22, was a blast once again. Between the dogs (hot ones), shave ice ("snow cones" [but better] for our mainland readers) and Santa Claus (the guy in red pajamas and white beard), over 60 children had a rollicking good time complete with presents (courtesy of Santa's elves **James Fitzpatrick** and **Sara and Nella Kleinschmidt** and **Seine, Viliami, Josh and Fane Lino**) and beautifully decorated Christmas Trees (including **Chris Ling**'s eighty footer (only a slight exaggeration...)) and all through the house, not a thing was stirring, not even a mouse (the mice were supplied by **Dave Hirashiki**'s nephew's really cool balloon guys who made, yes, mice, and dogs and swords and hats for everyone [yes, out of balloons] —even dear **Akiu Chock**, 93 years young, had a balloon bracelet on her wrist!)



"The ones who are crazy enough to change the world are the ones who do it." —Anonymous



Anaseini Lino

Christmas Eve

Holy Camoly! How many choirs can ring in the Christmas Eve mass? Lemme tell ya! The **Bell Choir!** The **Children's Choir!** The **Filipino Choir!** The **Chuukese Choir!** Two, count 'em, **two Tongan choirs** (*why two? Because we couldn't get three!*) PLUS lovely **Seine Lino** dancing for us PLUS **Marie Wang's** and **Naomi Yuen-Schat's** incredible organ music....it was a wonderful, heartfelt evening all offered up to the greater glory of God.



The Filipino Choir



One of the Tongan Choirs



Mother Imelda



The Chuukese Choir



Wreath made for the Kealohas.

Attendance



12/2	Sunday 9:00 Eucharist	124
12/2	Ilokano Service	26
12/5	Wed. Healing Eucharist	26
12/5	Ilokano Service	22
12/9	Sunday 9:00 Eucharist	170
12/9	Chinese Eucharist	3
12/12	Wed. Healing Eucharist	28
12/16	Sunday 9:00 am Eucharist	161
12/16	Chinese Eucharist	3
12/19	Wed. Healing Eucharist	22
12/23	Sunday 9:00 am Eucharist	171
12/24	Christmas Eve	204
12/25	Christmas Day	90
12/30	Sunday 9:00 am Eucharist	137
12/30	Chinese Eucharist	3



The Sunday School choir.



Mahalo

to each and everyone who donated lovely poinsettias:

Anonymous In honor of Adoracion Badua, Aurora Aguda, Mary Jara, Isabel Padasdao, Victorina Leybag, Joseph Tolentino and Mother Jodene

Anonymous In memory of Henry & Senang Ramos; and Fennan & Violet Aglarap

Aurora Aguda In memory fo Celo Aguda, Felix Sagucio, Jamie Sagucio

Nancy Au In memory of Robert & Rose Shim, Herbert Shim, and Reginald K. K. Au

Adoracion Badua In memory of Cipriano Badua, Elpidio Badua, Florencio Badua

Sarah & Jerry Bush In memory of Annie & Nathaniel Chock and Jennifer Bush

Patsy Ching & family In memory of Richard C. & Lucy Ching and Kenneth T. K. Ching

Chock Ohana In memory of James L. L. Chock

Chun Family In memory of Walter T. H. .Chun

Steve & Rae Costa

Beryl Goo In memory of Doris Goo

Millie & Jerry Goo In thanksgiving

Kathleen Hanawahine In memory of Chris Hanawahine

Mr. & Mrs. Michel Heltz In memory of Harriet & Lawson Green and Stewart Green

Allen K. Hoe In memory of Lt. Nanoe Hoe; in honor of RagDolls2Love

Miriam Hue & Myra Okimoto In memory of The Rev. Lawrence & Grace Ozuki; In memory of The Rev. Phillip & Kise Fukao

Thomas & Peggy Ishida In mrmory of Linda H. Ishida

Laura M. Iwami In memory of Masayoshi & Haru Iwami

Estella Iwerks In memory of Yuen Lin & Stella Lau

Mary Jara In memory of Francisco Jara, Sr., Pablo Carrera, and Simplicia Vallejos

Gretchen Jong In memory of Harry & Grace Goo

Dorothy Jung In memory of Richard Jung and Mabel & Ten Fook Ho

Pearl & Francis Kau In memory of Ruth Ho Fung and Joscelind Fung Zee

Kealoha Ohana In memory of Jalyne Lilinoe Kealoha Wong and James Kimo Kealoha

Charles & Judy Kokubun In memory of Mr. and Mrs. Takashi Kokubun and Mr. and Mrs. Minoru Nakaishi

Nora Kurosu In memory of Philip and Doris Ogimoto

Mary Ann & Preston Lentz In memory of our parents; in honor of our children and our St. Elizabeth's family

Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Leong In memory of Kin Hung Leong, Lo Lin Leong and Ukie Kihara

Victorina Leybag In memory of Bernardo Leybag, Brenda Leybag, Maximiniano Salazar, Adriana Salazar

Juliette Ling/Christine Ling In memory of Alim & Elizabeth Ling

Inarita Mafon

Maile Oshita Nicholas In memory of Nobuo Oshita, Tom See Foon, Arthur Woo, Etienne Fa'ang, Lani & Leialoha Nichols and Alii Nichols

Rev. Imelda S. Padasdao In memory of Florentino Padasdao, Mario Padasdao, Avelino & Elmer Padasdao

Isabel Padasdao In memory of Severo Padasdao, Edgar Padasdao, Ricardo & Perfetua Mabini

Lynette Shim In memory of Wallace Shim, Edward & Florence Shim, Dennis & Laura Chun and Gervin Akana

Margarita Suyat In thanksgiving to our Almighty Father for all the blessings he has given to the Brights, Guytons, Arakis and Suyats

Audrey Tam In memory of Wilfred Tyau, Florence Tyau and Frank Tyau; In honor of Audrey Tam and Raymond Tam

Joseph Tolentino In memory of Manuela Tolentino

Faye Tsukamoto In memory of Jack & Masa Tsukamoto, Elizabeth Wong and Walter Kau

Sue & Frank Yap & family In memory of Christina Yap, Florence Yap and Frank Yap, Sr.



Happy Birthday

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

Lynette Shim	1/1
Enriqueta Haller	1/1
Awaeliery Farata	1/2
Leo John Pangelina	1/5
Serenity Michael	1/6
Nella Kleinschmidt	1/9
Rebecca Kleinschmidt	1/10
Charles Steffey Jr. "Bubba"	1/11
Genevieve Hayakawa	1/11
Charlotte Jarrett	1/13
Troy Esaki	1/14
Soo Kil Park	1/14
Sylvia Rowland	1/14
Tarla Francis	1/14
Shaianne Sunagawa	1/18
Elyas Badua	1/18
Sharlene Yap	1/19
CharleySue Steffey	1/19
Jane Leong	1/20
Melba Meyshine	1/20
Rachel Marlow	1/21
Bertha Chong	1/23
Mark Anderson	1/25
Imensy Eichy	1/27
Iris Park	1/28
Kermelo White	1/28
Susan Kau	1/29
Allison Marlow	1/31

Pledge Report

**Many thanks
to all who have
pledged for 2013!**



We have received
over 100 pledges to date, totaling over
\$110,000!

Again, THANK YOU for your
commitment to the Lord's work at St.
Elizabeth's!

The Journey of The Magi

A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter.'
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.

Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped in away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for Birth or Death?
There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

-T.S. Elliot

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A House of Prayer for all People

Return service requested

Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Community Worship Service
Monday, January 21, 2013
6:00 music
6:30 pm service

St Elizabeth's will again host the Martin Luther King, Jr. Ecumenical Service on January 21, 2013, starting at 6:00 pm.

Folks from many different Christian denominations will be on hand, with at least two full gospel choirs doing their thing before, during and after the service; a great speaker and more than a few surprise guests...so come by and join us as we honor and rededicate ourselves to the dreams of Dr. King!



I, Too, Sing America

*I, too, sing America.
I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh, And eat well,
And grow strong.
Tomorrow, I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
'Eat in the kitchen,'
Then.
Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—
I, too, am America.*

—Langston Hughes



Mark your calendars

St. Elizabeth's Annual Meeting
Sunday, January 27, 2013

Committee chairs, please submit your reports by Jan. 20th!