

*"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

**June 2011**

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## Go and Tell

*The Reverend David J. Gierlach*

It's a great time to be a Christian. Great because our world is so much like the world of the first Christians. Those who were called to "go and tell" the good news of what God is doing in Jesus Christ.

Paul shows up in the university town of Athens. It's loaded with intellectuals who can't wait to hear the next new thing.

"Who's the next Athenian Idol?"

"Tell me more about Scientology!"

The folks in Athens have gods and goddesses for every occasion. And just in case they forgot one, there's the statue to the unknown god. They've covered their bases.

Our world really isn't much different.

Scripture tells us that an idol is anything that we hang our hopes on, put our trust in, look to for safety, for security, that is not God.

Like our friends in ancient Athens, we too are sophisticated, educated, rational and smart. So we naturally have plenty of our own idols: the Pentagon, my retirement plan, patriotism, and, of course, Las Vegas, to name but a few.

But we also have Oprah, a gal who struck it rich and made a living out of giving away advice and new cars, whose retirement has left millions crying "what will we do without her??"

We have flavor of the day religious beliefs.

Anything from Shirley McClain's New Age stuff to L. Ron Hubbard to the guy who did the math and decided the world ended last Saturday.

My own wife calls herself a "Buddhist Christian."

(Don't mention that to the Bishop please).

Athens, you see, has nothing over on us!

What is Paul, what are we, to say to this world of "I'm OK, you're OK?"

In the first place, it's probably important to realize that the problem is not getting people to worship.

Human beings are made to worship.

The question is, what shall we worship? Or, more to the point, whom do we worship?

Which brings us to Paul who proclaims: "The God who made the world and everything in it, who is Lord of heaven and earth, who does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as if he needed anything, since he himself gives all mortals life and breath and all things."

This is the God Paul announces.

Yet, for so many of our friends, our relatives, this God often seems to be far away from us.

And because of that feeling that God is far away, many who want to be Christians are in fact Deists: folks who believe God exists, but who also believe that once God set the whole shebang in motion, God took a vacation, leaving us to our own devices.

Being a deist has very direct consequences.

If God is far away, then we have no choice but to rely on our own common sense; to throw ourselves into this life, to compete for scarce resources, and by sheer wits and guts figure out how to survive it.



# Rector's Message, cont.

But as Meister Eckhart says, "If you feel that God is far away from you, go back to the place on the trail where you left him, and there you will find him, waiting for you."

It is not God who leaves us; it is we who leave God.

We leave God when the idols we create take the place of God. How do we find our way back on the trail? Perhaps like this.

When we trade our common sense for God's outrageous call to place all our trust in him; we are walking back to God.

When we come to believe that the Church is not just another business, and instead bet all we have on the God who pays the last guy to show up the same amount as the gal who's been there since dawn; who scatters seeds wildly about in all directions and waits to see what happens; who loves the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly; that's when we begin to sidle up to the living God.

I'm no scientist and nearly flunked high school chemistry, but I've always found science, particularly physics, to be fascinating.

Especially the physics known as quantum mechanics.

Quantum mechanics is the science of really small stuff: particles that are smaller than atoms.

A single particle can, according to the scientists, be in many places at the same time, and that is very odd. I thought only mothers could do that!

And for the longest time, scientists thought these strange properties were confined to the sub atomic world.

Except, today, science is wondering if this oddball quantum mechanics may also apply to the big world, the world you and I move around in and know so well.

Today, science is wondering if we really do know our world, if what we touch and taste and smell and hear is not what reality really is.

That maybe there are such things as parallel universes, even different versions of you and I, where every choice or decision in life, every road not taken, is fully lived out some where, some when, some how, by a different you, a different me.

And all that science got me to thinking that maybe our reality and God's reality is not defined by "down here" and "up there" but by a thin veil that separates the two, and yet weaves between the two, like gossamer.

That somehow, heaven is all wrapped up, all wrapped around, all wrapped within, the earth.

Paul says as much to those curious Athenians.

God is that "in which we live and move and have our being."

We can no more escape the God who knows us each by name; who knows the number of hairs on your head; who knit you together in your mother's womb; this God who "holds our souls in life, and will not allow our feet to slip"; we can no more escape this God than a fish can live outside of the sea.

The wind that blows across the face of this world, it is the breath of God.

It is God's breath that we are breathing; right here, right now.

Which is exactly where Jesus is with his friends today.

Helping them, helping us, to see that unless he leaves, he can't come back. Unless he goes, he cannot stay with us.

It's always that way with Jesus.

Paradox points the way home.

Jesus makes a promise today. You will not be orphaned. I will be back. I'll be back as the Holy Spirit, the very spirit of God who will never leave you.

And who does he promise but an Advocate; you may know him as your friendly neighborhood criminal defense lawyer!

So much for all of the lawyer jokes, eh?

And the criminal defense lawyer, the Advocate that Jesus sends, comes to live among us, first so that we may face our own need for repentance, and then, so that we might do what Jesus does: advocate for and defend the poor, the weak, the widow; advocate for the Reality that God is with us; advocate for a life that hangs its hopes, not on idols, but on the Living God.

The Irish, who've been in the news this week because of the visit of President Barry O' Bama, describe the Holy Spirit as an Irish Goose.

The Irish Goose is a large, honking, noisy, somewhat clumsy, brash bird.

The Holy Spirit, like the Irish goose, shakes things up; she ruffles feathers, she attracts attention.

Choose your metaphor.

Both the criminal lawyer and the goose are often large, honking, sometimes clumsy, noisy and brash, for such is the way that God enters our lives.

Notice this as well.

Jesus doesn't call his disciples to a sweet, private "me and you Jesus" moment.

He calls them instead to wash each other's feet, he calls them to follow the King who dies a criminal's death on the cross.

## Rector's Message, cont.

And what they discover, as they begin to do what Jesus does, is that the gossamer, the veil, between heaven and earth, itself begins to thin; and they, we, are able to catch glimpses of the heaven that is even now invading the earth.

Annie Dillard speaks of walking in a farm one summer morning, when quite suddenly everything went quiet, "The roosters stopped. All the things of the world—the fields and the fencing, the road, a parked orange truck, were stricken and self-conscious. A world pressed down on their surfaces, a world battered just within their surfaces, so near to emerging. . . . I had to turn away. Holiness is a force, and it can be resisted. It was as if God had said: 'I am here, but not as you have known me.'" Dillard, *Teaching a Stone to Talk*, 133-35.

Perhaps you have known these moments too . . . your long dead husband returns to you in a dream to laugh and hold you.

Sitting on the porch at dusk, a flock of birds soar, lifting your heart along for the ride.

These fleeting moments of a world just waiting to be born, the brush of heaven's kiss upon our cheek.

They are holy.

They are unexpected.

And while they leave us almost as soon as they arrive, they change us; deepening who we are; opening pieces we didn't know we held.

With the Advocate living among us, we need not look to the sky for Jesus, we need not worry that God has left us to our own wits to get by.

God is with us, right here, third row back, 4th from the left, though we often have trouble recognizing him.

And at the same time, God is everywhere else as well, having gone on ahead of us to Galilee.

Or was it Kalihi?

How shall we tell the world who Jesus is?

By doing what Jesus does.

Now go, and tell.

+amen.



## Coaches Wanted

We are in discussions with Palama Settlement about getting a **St. E's Basketball team** together (the Saints? The Marauders? Whaddaya think?) to compete against other teams in the area. Anyone have the time, talent, desire, to be a head coach? Assistant coach? Waterboy? Please see Fr. Saimone.

## Gorgeous lei!



Congratulations to **Viliani Lino**, son of Fr. Saimone and Fane Lino, as he graduated from high school in May. Viliani shared his graduation lei with Fr. David and all the other priests at St. E'S.

## The Art of Fishing

A rich industrialist from the North was horrified to find a Southern fisherman lying leisurely beside his boat.

"Why aren't you fishing?" asked the industrialist.

"Because I have caught enough fish for the day," said the fisherman.

"Why don't you catch some more?"

"What would I do with them?"

"You could earn more money," was the reply. "With that, you could fix a motor to your boat, go into deeper waters and catch more fish. Then you would make enough money to buy nylon nets. These would bring you more fish and more money. Soon you would have enough money to own two boats . . . maybe even a fleet of boats. Then you would be a rich man like me."

"What would I do then?"

"Then you could really enjoy life."

"What do you think I'm doing right now," asked the fisherman." *Common Prayer*, p.293.

# Spaghetti Dinner, May 27th



Margarita Suyat's evangelism brought these new friends to the Spaghetti Dinner on May 27th.



Lots of fun at the monthly Spaghetti Dinner and Dance on May 27th.



Our line dance instructors.

## Quotable Quote

Thomas Merton said: "In order to become myself I must cease to be what I always thought I wanted to be, and in order to find myself I must go out of myself, and in order to live I have to die. Therefore, be careful if you are thinking of making friends with the Holy Spirit—because he's going to ask you to die!"

Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation*, 36.



Aunty Nora and garlic bread.

## Service Opportunities

As summer approaches, there are a number of SHORT TERM service opportunities that you might enjoy, including stopping by the church once a month for three months to **write a card** or three to some of our **shut-in elders**; or taking on the **spaghetti sauce creation** for one of our monthly dinner/dance nites; or **teaching a Sunday School class** once a month for two months; or **inviting a Chuukese couple** for an outing (shave ice on the beach for an hour or so?) or **join the choir** for 6 months or help Nora **harvest the garden** one Saturday or join Charlie Kokobun and Ignacia Terno for **Food Pantry duty** one week or **join a weekly prayer group** that will gather to pray the Anglican rosary on behalf of those on our long form prayer list. Sign up sheets are on the side table on til June 15!!

## Attendance

5/1	Sunday 8:15	142
5/1	Ilokano Service	31
5/4	Wed. Healing Eucharist	19
5/4	Wed. Ilokano Service	31
5/8	Sunday 8:15 am	146
5/8	Chinese Service	6
5/11	Wed. Healing Eucharist	21
5/15	Sunday 8:15 am	151
5/15	Chinese Service	6
5/18	Wed. Healing Eucharist	17
5/22	Sunday 8:15 am	182
5/25	Wed. Healing Eucharist	35
5/29	Sunday 8:15 am	142



# Honolulu Handbell Ensemble

All are welcome to experience a special performance by the Honolulu Handbell Ensemble on **Saturday, June 11, at 4 PM** here at St. Elizabeth's church. Our own, Marie Wang, organist, is a member. It promises to be a wonderful musical experience!

## Blooper in the bulletin of an Episcopal church in Massachusetts:

"In the absence of the Rector, the Curate will take care of all pastoral cuties." *via JoyfulNoiseLetter*

## News From the Youth Squad

The under 15 crowd had a great sleepover in Shim Hall on May 26 and on May 27 took their first ever trip to the Water Park in Kapolei. The kids had to earn points for attendance and behavior all year in order to attend, and thankfully, all of them made it! Many thanks to Fr. Saimone, Rebecca Steffey, Faith Chock and James Fitzpatrick for making a memorable end of school funfest for the kids!!

## A Special Thank You

As you know, the *Vine and Branches* reaches you every month, neatly folded, and right on time. What you may not know is that **Kathy Crosier** does the layout, editing and overall publishing, **Patsy Ching, Richard and Wai Wah Yee, Jimmy and Lani Kealoha, Millie Goo, Tom and Peggy Ishida, Dorothy Jung, Laura Iwami, Charlie & Judy Kokubun, and Pearl Kau** come together each and every month to do the hard labor of assembling, folding, taping and mailing of over 300 issues! And after all of that, **Aunt Nancy** and her kitchen angels feed one and all! Thanks to you all!



## Happy Birthday

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

Jerry Goo	6/1
Kerty Robert	6/1
Sansom Kom	6/2
Caleb Ramelb	6/2
Daniel Lai	6/3
Elipha Sorcey	6/3
Wallace Tyau	6/4
Caridad Badua	6/4
Noah Blaisdell	6/5
Teatuahere Gierlach	6/8
William Blaisdell	6/8
Linda Venenciano	6/8
Pearl Kau	6/8
Margarita Suyat	6/8
Glenn Woo	6/8
Lori Ho	6/9
Tracy Blaisdell	6/9
Allen Chan	6/9
Charles Kokubun	6/11
Bless Salvator	6/11
Rev. Jodene Hawkins	6/12
Sharon Sunagawa	6/15
Lani Kealoha	6/16
Lani Kaaihue	6/17
Alan Ramos	6/17
Estella Iwerks	6/17
Ignacia Terno	6/17
Kenneth Fujishige	6/18
Nakayama Michael	6/19
Larry Young	6/20
Ancheny Kom	6/20
Madson Michael	6/20
Eunice Hughes	6/21
Caroline Anderson	6/22
Stephen Chun	6/22
Mason Starkman	6/25
Imenta Helly	6/26
Laura Smith	6/29

*There is no illness worse than desire; no foe fiercer than attachment; no fire so ravenous as anger; no ally so reliable as wisdom. —Sathy Sai baba*

# Summary of Church Meeting

on May 22, 2010

## Overview of maintenance completed to date.

In addition to what was already printed in the briefing of “Who We Are and Where We’ve Been” handout the following was added:

- Kitchen grease trap
- Kitchen electrical brought up to code

Additional maintenance request from Ms. Chock for Sunday School given to Junior Warden

## Recommendations

### Parking

- A note be sent to those who park at St. Elizabeth’s about children who run about the parking lot and to drive with extreme caution.
- Someone from the *First to Work* Program needs to be in charge of caring for the children who are there during their volunteer time at the church.
- Extend the fence to the back so the children can be kept in the enclosed area created along the sidewalk.

### Children’s Activities

- Partner with Kaumakapili Church
- Volunteer coach for basketball (Nancy Au will ask Vince deBeena from Palama Settlement)
- PAL league
- Worm pots provided to children who would take them home and compost and then return them to our garden

### Fellowship Activities

- Christmas potluck party for adults
- Cultural days featuring two ethnicities at a time to educate in a fun environment

### Prayer

- Prayer groups for those that are ill or distress
- Cards to shut-ins
- Home visits to shut ins by parishioners

### Emergency Supports

- Purchase a defibrillator and coordinate training for church members who are willing to learn and be one of the designated members who would be able to help anyone who require the use of one.
- CPR training offered at St. Elizabeth’s Church.

## Questions

- Why don’t we have a preschool anymore?

**Answer:** It has been over twenty years since we have had a preschool at St. Elizabeth’s. It was closed when the State imposed regulations that the church was unable to meet.

- Shared the email from Peter Pereira about how pledges displaced the money for the poor. Some members would like to be more informed about this. It will be shared at a later date.

## Concerns

- Why are we paying someone who is a parishioner to do the landscaping?

It was a decision that the Vestry felt would benefit those who are struggling to find jobs to give them a “lift up” while continuing to maintain our campus. Along with this, the ladies who are required to volunteer in the *First to Work* Program at St. Elizabeth’s are cleaning the church and Shim Hall at no cost to us, saving us approximately \$8,000 a year and giving them work skills.

- Why are we not using volunteers to do our maintenance work on the Church campus if we are trying to save money because of the tight budget?

For the past few years, there was a backlog of regular maintenance, due to budget concerns, but more recently, the need to meet State Building Code requirements. The decision to address immediate needs, like the grease trap and kitchen electrical to code. Please see the Junior Warden column in the *Vine and Branches* for a more detailed report.

- Use of Shim Hall and Kitchen procedures has not been followed.

New procedures have been developed and a packet is available upon request to anyone, parishioners and outsiders, to complete for any non-Church sponsored event.



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## Junior Warden's Report *Preston Lentz*

This is a quick update to the parish about various projects around our campus which have been accomplished during the first four months of 2011. To date (and this is a partial list): the kitchen grease trap has been repaired; the kitchen electrical system has been brought up to code; the Shim Hall louvers have been repaired or replaced; various louvers in the Rectory have been replaced; the source of the leak above the Meeting Room has been repaired; work in the Sacristy and the Sunday School rooms has been undertaken as requested; our first "Parish Work Day" of the year was held on the Saturday before Palm Sunday with almost 40 parishioners and friends helping; the condition and status of our Tiffany stained glass window has been reviewed and re-affirmed; rental and insurance policies for outside groups seeking to use our facilities have been reviewed and updated; and, Shim Hall was painted by Bank of Hawaii's employee volunteer group.

The basis for the work has been part of a three-fold process: immediate needs and code requirements; those less pressing; and, long-term, capital requirements. We are making significant progress on the first part. The second part will consist of those projects and tasks which the parish can undertake and continue on our own or with outside help. The final portion will involve the identification of those long-term projects and budgeting specific to our 60-year old church structure. With regard to this latter category, a small group of parishioners has agreed to help the identification of and budget estimates for our capital needs.

St. Elizabeth's carries the physical legacy of our own "Greatest Generation." However, as this group now begins to wind down their ability and energies to continue the work they so ably handled for so long, the hope is for the rest of the parish to undertake many of the aspects of our physical needs. By doing so, we will be able not only to reduce our maintenance costs but also to rekindled the legacy of care and participation which was such a strength of our Greatest Generation. However, when necessary and if available, we will take advantage of the expertise of members of the parish, especially if the work done is of a specific nature and is offered at a reduced cost. Lastly, there will be those projects for which we must seek outside, professional help.

Finally, as one who remains uncertain about the electrocution possibilities of replacing light bulbs, I'd like to thank **Patsy Ching, Sylvia Rowland, Roy Chee, David Hirashiki, Lowell Ing, and Tom Ishida**, the members of the Property Committee, for their patience, dedication, and commitment. I can't conclude this first report without also thanking **Fr. David** and **Arleen Young**. Had they not offered this "cup" to me, I'd have never known anything about the hydrostatic flushing systems of our commercial grade toilets.

## Greetings From the Garden

The Manoa Lettuce has continued to be a hit, with huge heads popping up all month. Many thanks to Nora Kurosu and so many of our First To Work friends who continue to weed and trim and keep the garden looking absolutely lovely

## The Waters of Baptism



Welcomed into the Lord's Family through the Sacrament of Baptism on May 22, 2011 were **Charles Edward Mana Steffey, Jr.**, son of Charles and Rebecca Steffey, and **Jayden-Aldrich Romena**, son of Richard Romena and Rosita Baguio.

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## Are You Handy?

As our church continues to age, maintenance is our most expensive liability. In this regard, the Property Committee intends to develop a registry of parishioner skills with which to use for "in-house" repairs before a contractor is consulted. If

a parishioner wishes to be listed in this publication and is willing to **donate their particular skills**, please contact Junior Warden Preston Lentz.

A six-year-old boy told his father one day, "I'm going outdoors and play ball with God."

"So how do you play ball with God?" the father asked.

"Oh, it's not hard at all," the boy replied. "I just throw the ball up, and God throws it back down to me."



*A friend is someone who knows the song in your heart and can sing it back to you when you have forgotten the words. — Anonymous*



**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.**