

"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

March 2011

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Robert L. Fitzpatrick
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

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Imelda S. Padasdao,
Priest Associate

The Reverend Saimone Lino,
Diocesan Missioner

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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

Arleen Young
Senior Warden

Preston Lentz
Junior Warden

Stuart Ching
Secretary / Clerk

Heather Manning, Treasurer

Website:
www.stelizabeth720.org

Email:
stelizabethhawaii@gmail.com

Fear Not

The Reverend David J. Gierlach

Today's gospel, in which Jesus points to birds and grass, to lilies and field flowers, invites each of us to join St. Peter as he stepped out of the boat and onto the chaotic waters. As long as he keeps his focus on Jesus, short-fused Peter, questioning Peter, loyal Peter, walks on that water.

For today, Jesus calls on each of us to get out of the boat, and, focusing on him, in all of our own ornery, questioning, but loyal selves, to walk on that water too.

Why am I talking about boats and water? Because "do not worry about your life" is another way of saying, "step out of the boat, walk on the water."

At first glance, it's totally crazy.

We cannot NOT worry about our life!
Everyone knows we can't walk on water.
Except, that as followers of Jesus, we can.

The first place Jesus takes us to today is to ask: "To whom are you loyal?" That is the first question.

The answer to that question determines the life we choose: whether we help or decline to help; who we look out for; whom do we follow?

"To whom are you loyal?" asks Jesus.

In America, we try hard to have it both ways. On every dollar bill are the words: "In God we trust."

The irony, for a Christian, is almost unbearable.

Jesus makes it clear we cannot have it both ways:

"You cannot serve God and wealth."

But, by golly, so many want so much to have it both ways!

So to try to have it both ways, we too often have turned the God of Jesus Christ into a national god, a god with a small "g"; a god who sports red, white and blue, a god who blesses our wars, a god who blesses our way of life.

If you listen to certain radio or TV programs, you will hear all about this god.

But make no mistake, that god is an idol. That god is false. That god has no relationship to the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; the true God.

And we know this because the life and work of Jesus directly contradicts the god of the flag, the god of money, the god of material success.

The god of the flag, the god of capitalism, the god of "our way of life" is based on fear, it is based on anxiety, it is based on worry. Fear, anxiety and worry are used quite intentionally to motivate people to work (or you will starve), to consume (so you can keep up with the neighbors), to be defensive when meeting the stranger (as with immigrants and others who are different).

Fear, anxiety and worry excuse trillions of dollars spent on wars and weapons of war. Fear, anxiety and worry drive people to extreme political positions where compromise seems hopeless and impasse and blame the only result.

Fear, anxiety and worry keep us isolated from one another, distrustful of one another, separated from one another.



Rector's Message (continued)

Into this reality, a reality as old as humanity, God comes.

The oldest and most frequent commandment from God to human beings, the one God insists upon over and over; the command given to Moses when he came upon the burning bush; the command Gabriel gave to Mary as he explained the odd things that were about to happen to her; the command Jesus gave to the apostles when he was transfigured; when he appeared to them after he was raised; the command of God to humanity is this:

“Fear not!”

And oh the power we experience, in our individual and communal lives, when we obey that command! Imagine, and then try to live, for just one hour a day, a life with no fear.

For an hour a day, practice:

No fear of rejection, no fear of the stranger, no fear of hunger, no fear of loss, no fear of change and no fear even of death.

In that one hour, you can walk on water!

Faith in the Living God is the cure for fear.

To the extent we live in fear, we are worshipping a false god, a god of country or economic system; a god the Bible calls the “powers and principalities” of this world.

In them is only fear. But faith in the Living God chases out all fear.

“Fear imprisons; faith liberates; fear paralyzes, faith empowers; fear disheartens, faith encourages; fear sickens, faith heals; fear makes useless, faith makes serviceable; and most of all, fear puts hopelessness at the heart of life, while faith rejoices in its God.” (H. Fosdick)

Faith that drives out fear explains the joy with which Jesus lives his life. He loves a good party. He showers forgiveness on the worst of people, without even being asked for it!

He is extravagant with seeds and pearls and loaves and fish and wine and prodigal sons and daughters. Jesus spends a lot of time smiling with the smile that comes from a life lived in the freedom of God. A smile he invites you and I to wear as well.

None of this is to say that life won't be hard at times. At our Wednesday healing service, we had the same gospel lesson as today, but a different part of Paul's letter introduced the gospel on Wednesday.

St. Paul's letter the other day recalls his hardships: the countless beatings, of being set adrift at sea, jailed, betrayed by false friends, his hunger and thirst.

Loss, death, disappointment, betrayal; none of that is new to Paul, and for you and I, we are most of us well acquainted with it all.

These things will come, as Jesus well knows. Yet even in the face of all of this is God's steadfast and eternal command to Paul, to

Mary, to you, to me: “Fear not!”

Can we, after all, add an hour to our span of life?

Today's gospel lesson is, in a sense, the entire gospel in a nutshell.

To live one day at a time, carrying out whatever task is placed before us; trusting in the good God of creation that no matter what winds will blow, no matter the difficulties or persecutions or trouble that may come, that through it all we may be still, knowing that God is God, and therefore, all will be well, and all will be well and all manner of things will be well.

+amen

Shrove Tuesday



Shrove Tuesday, or, as it's better known at St. E's, PANCAKE DELIGHT NIGHT, will be celebrated on **Tuesday March 8, 2011** beginning

with a brief evening prayer at 6pm and followed by our wonderful, sweet tooth night time breakfast as we prepare for our journey through Lent, beginning the next day, Ash Wednesday.

Please come, one and all!

Ash Wednesday, March 9

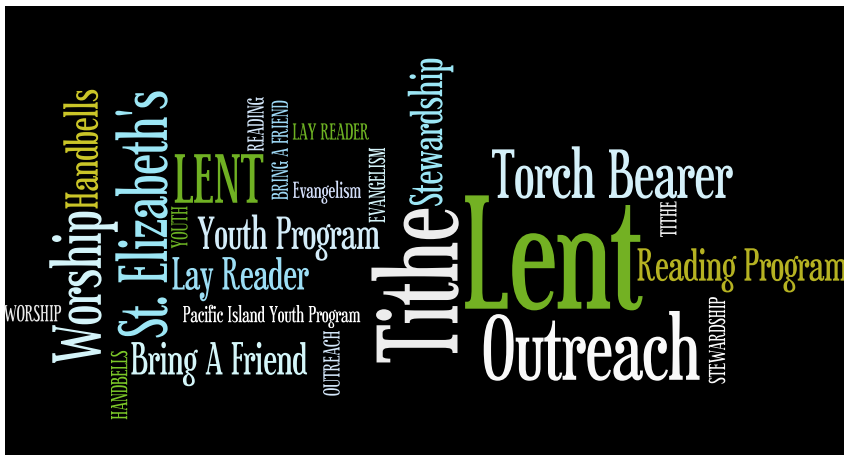
12:00 Noon

6:00 PM

Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion. There will be no healing service or adult study on this day.

Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.





Lent is a challenge to change —change in prayer, reflection, and involvement. During the 40 days of Lent, I agree to do one of the following:

Worship: Handbells Usher Lay Reader
 Altar Guild Torchbearer Crucifer

Evangelism Bring a friend to St. Elizabeth's

Stewardship Tithe during Lent

Outreach Pacific Island Youth Program
 (Wednesday afternoons)
 Princess Kaiulani Reading Program
 (Thursday afternoons, 2:00-3:00 pm)

Other _____

NAME _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Please place this form in the offering plate or hand to an usher.

The Lenten Season

From March 9 until April 23, a period of 46 days, we enter the season of Lent. Lent is the season when the Church invites us to stop for a while, to take stock, and perhaps to change course. For some, this is a season of self-denial, of fasting, of sacrifice. For others, it is a time to try something new, a new type of service or outreach or ministry. For all of us, these holy days offer a chance to go to the desert, if not literally, then in our hearts, to hear the silence of God among us; to recall the blessings we have each of us received, and to renew our commitment to the Way of Jesus Christ our Lord. May the last days of this Lenten season find you to be a somewhat different person than you were in its first days.

Someone's cellphone rang in the middle of a priest's sermon at a morning church service.

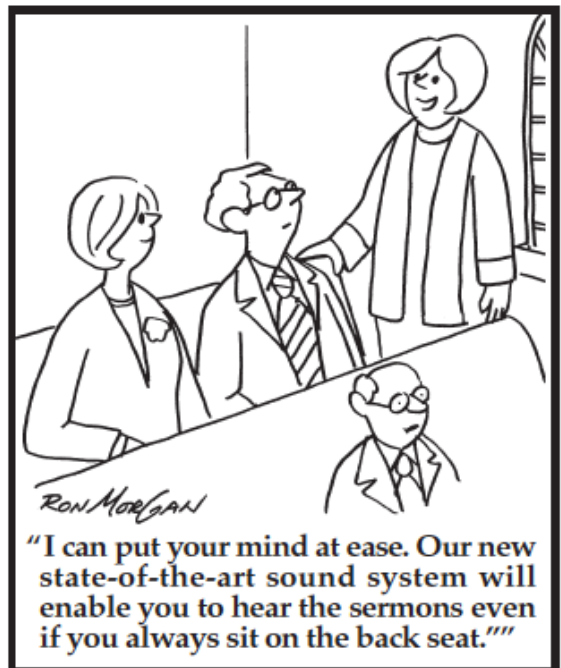
The priest hesitated a moment, then said,

"You'd better get that. It might be God calling you." (*Joyful Noiseletter*)

Senior Cross



Senior Cross awards were presented to **Patsy Ching** and **Sue Yap** on Feb. 27.



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Mayor Wright Hot Water

Nearly 40 Mayor Wright residents and supporters went to the State Legislature on Friday, February 22 to ask, politely, for hot water at the housing complex. Hot water has been spotty to non-existent for as long as 7 years! St. Elizabeth's worked with the Mayor Wright tenants association to organize participants, rent a school bus, and go from door to door and visit with state representatives and the governor's office. FACE, an ecumenical community organizing group (of which St. E's was a founding member many moons ago) also worked with us on this worthy cause. Thanks for all who helped!



Quotable Quotes

"God creates out of nothing. Wonderful, you say. Yes, to be sure, but He does what is still more wonderful: he makes saints out of sinners."

S. Kierkegaard

"One of the first things that happens when a person is really filled with the Spirit is not that one speaks in tongues, but that one learns to hold the tongue one already has."

J. S. Baxter



Attendance

2/2	Wednesday Eucharist	16
2/2	Ilokano Service	39
2/6	Sunday 8:15 am	121
2/6	Ilokano Service	41
2/9	Wednesday Eucharist	14
2/13	Sunday 8:15 am	154
2/13	Chinese Service	6
2/16	Wednesday Eucharist	24
2/20	Sunday 8:15 am	150
2/20	Chinese Service	5
2/23	Wednesday Eucharist	11
2/27	Sunday 8:15 am	162
2/27	Chinese Service	5



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with March birthdays!

Colin Wong	3/1
Kifenin Dopich	3/1
Obeyi Helly	3/3
Mildred Hirashiki	3/3
Roy Chee	3/5
Doreen Ching	3/7
Marites Unarce	3/7
Aadriana White	3/9
Arleen Young	3/12
Istina Eichy	3/13
Sarah Bush	3/14
Ruthann Sorcey	3/16
Miranda Young	3/17
Haku Blaisdell	3/17
Anaseini Lino	3/28
Gerald Lau	3/29

Sunday School News

The Sunday School children are busy and eagerly ready to take the 40 day journey through lent into Easter! Please join the children for their annual **Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper** with Fr. David flipping the pancakes, Tuesday, March 8th! Meet in the church for a short evening prayer and then move on to Shim Hall for the fun, fellowship and pancakes!!!

During Lent, the children will process in with the acolytes and clergy and do a Lenten call to worship at the Lenten wreath before going to Sunday school. During Advent, we gathered and lit the advent wreath preparing for the Christ child; during Lent, the season before Easter, we will snuff out the candles on the Lenten wreath in preparation for the coming of Christ's Passion Week.

The children are getting to know the blue hymnals and how to read 'verses' when we sing a song! They know how to exercise their diaphragms and recognize a 'flat'! Thank you, Miss Ajaon! And thank you to one brave 'guest' mom joining the music class, Kenji's mom, **Mrs. Kaipo McCartney**. We hope to see more moms and dads in the next music class!

And what's growing in that garden plot? Help yourselves to a sprig of rosemary, look for our carrots on the produce table, you might see our radish too! The kai lan unfortunately had too much dirt!!! The string beans were devoured by the little munchkins in Miss Jamie's class.

We're looking forward to 'spring' planting soon!



Welcomed to the Lord's Family

through the Sacrament of Baptism on February 13th were **Richard, Ronald and Katherine Roke**, children of Antonif Roke and Gladys Likka, and **Awaeliery Ferata and Viola Arabe**, children of John Arabe and Earin Ferata-Arabe.



News From The Garden

Our community garden continues to produce wonderful fruits, veggies and herbs. The papaya are already 16 feet long and everyone is afraid to pick it for fear of being squashed (did we really say that?!) The mint leaves are a tasty addition to your evening mint julep and the stuff we thought was spinach turns out to be a lovely bunch of arugula. Swing on by and stick a seed in the ground!

We bid Aloha to Jennifer Watanabe who has been called to serve in another church. Jen has been a faithful minister of St. E's for years. We wish her well as she continues to share the good news of Our Lord.

St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
720 N. King Street
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A House of Prayer for all People

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Make music to the Lord!



The Handbell Choir, the Sunday School children, the Chuukese Choir, and the Tongan Choir alternate in presenting music for the offertory each Sunday. All are welcome to come to St. E's to rehearse Sunday's hymns each Thursday night from 7:30 to 8:00 pm.