

"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

October 2010

The Right Reverend
Robert L. Fitzpatrick
V Bishop of Hawaii

The Reverend
David J. Gierlach
Rector

The Reverend
Imelda S. Padasdao,
Priest Associate

The Reverend Saimone Lino,
Diocesan Missioner

The Reverend Dr.
Gerald G. Gifford,
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

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The Rascal

The Rev. David J. Gierlach

Sometimes you wonder if Jesus tells a particular story just to see if we're listening. "Yeah, yeah, Jesus, blah, blah, thank you very much."

"What?!"

Such is the story of the unjust steward.

The story of the unjust steward is so obnoxious, so offensive, so just plain weird to our ears because it not only ignores our rules about owning things, about private property, about "our rights", it doesn't just ignore those rules, it laughs at them.

Our rules of ownership, of private property, of "mine", are as much a part of me as my skin and bones. We each of us have our own things: houses or apartments, clothes, toys, jewelry; all stuff that is "mine". And while from time to time, out of the kindness of my heart, I might share what is mine with you, I never forget, in my heart of hearts, that what is being shared is mine.

On these rules of mine and yours we have built our society. We have built our society as well on rules that flow from the rule of mine and yours. Rules like, "Don't cheat the boss" and "Be a loyal worker". These rules bind us together; they define who we are.

In the face of these rules, Jesus tells his story. A crooked employee is caught with his hand in the boss's till. That's bad enough. But then the rascal goes out and shafts the boss again!

The olive oil that one fellow got but didn't pay for? \$51,000 in today's money is written off by the rascal. The wheat the other fellow owed on? The price was reduced by \$68,000! No matter how rich the boss was, that's real money.



Listening to the story as it goes along, you gotta believe Jesus is going to knock this rascal out of the park. He's thumbed his nose at all the rules. He has no respect for what belongs to the boss. He takes what plainly belongs to the boss and treats it as his own.

And yet, there it is, sitting in this gospel lesson. Like a piece of unanchored flotsam drifting in the sea. Totally unexpected. Totally out of place. Yet there it is: "The master praised the steward!" What on earth is Jesus talking about?

There's a lot of talk these days about socialism (as in: "Obama is a socialist"). Every day as I pick up Tea from the Priory, I'm behind the car with the bumper sticker that shouts: Say No To Socialism!

There's a lot of talk these days about redistributing wealth, or not. There's a lot of talk these days about every person being responsible for his or her own success, or failure. In short, the rules of Mine and Yours are high up on the hot topic list these days. And when something gets up there like that, you and I, as followers of the way of Jesus Christ, we may want to take a peek at what our faith says about this topic of

Rector's Message, cont.

“mine” and “yours”.

In the early church, from the Book of Acts, it is reported with pride that: “All the believers were of one heart and mind. No one claimed any of their possessions as their own, but they shared everything they had....There were no needy persons among them.”

Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard-pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn, their plenty will supply what you need. Then, there will be equality.”

Some may look at that kind of equality as a kind of socialism or communism. As a kind of crazy far out idea.

Yet, the kind of generosity that the early Christians lived, that Paul encouraged the Corinthians to live, is still a step short of the generosity that explodes out of this gospel lesson.

“Generosity?!” you say, “more like thievery!” But take a step back.

We say it all the time. “Everything belongs to God.” “All I have is from God”. And today, Jesus sits us down, pulls his chair right up to ours, and nose to nose, eyeball to eyeball, asks: “Do you really buy that?”

What the crooked employee did was to cancel a huge debt. He treated the master's money as if it were his own. He eliminated the distinction between what is mine and what is yours.

He trusted completely in the mercy of the master. He risked everything on the mercy of the master.

And then, something unexpected happens.

Remember the relationships between Master, the rascal and the debtors at the start of the story? The rascal was out to cheat the boss. The debtors hated the boss. The boss didn't trust the rascal. That's where everyone started.

Then, the rascal goes off and pulls this outrageous stunt; and the relationships between everyone change. The debtors praise the boss, the boss praises the rascal, and the debtors are relieved of their debt.

You know what this sounds like. You know!

It sounds like the Kingdom of God, in all its upsidedownness; in all its bizarre, joyful, exuberant rule-breaking.

Like when Jesus drove the establishment crazy going around forgiving sins, healing even on the holy day, feeding the hungry, raising the dead!

All for free. All for free.

Today's gospel drags us to the mirror of our orderly rule-bound society, our orderly, rule-bound lives, and says: “Look!”

Our rules help us to feel safe; but a love of safety so easily, so imperceptibly, yet so overwhelmingly, transforms lives meant for flight into lives lived in small enclosed rooms; rooms that, in time, become stuffy and lonely.

And if we get brutally honest about it all, the fact is, our rules seek to protect us from each other; to protect us even from God.

This bizarre story beckons us to peek out from our small, safe rooms, and begin to see that we are meant for each other; to see that what God threatens us with is life, life in all its fullness.

A fellow tells the story of playing hide and seek as a child. He finds himself the very best hiding place; there, under the porch, where no one ever looks. It is so fun hiding there, watching the other kids run by. He will never be found!

Then it dawns on him: he will never be found!

So he sticks out his toe; just his toe, and sure enough, he's tagged. He's it. And the fun of the game starts all over again.

Today, Jesus calls to us “All ye all ye in free!” Come in through the door of God's free grace! Come in through the grace that shatters our rules! A grace that shatters the distinctions between Mine and Yours. A grace that, in the shattering, sets us free to create a world of abundance, to create a world of joy, to create a world of peace.

+amen

The Lord's Laughter

A new church secretary was trying to open a combination lock on an office cabinet. The pastor had told her the combination, but she couldn't remember it. She went to the pastor's office and asked him for help. The pastor went to the room and began to turn the dial. After the first two numbers, he paused and looked heavenward, seemingly quietly praying. Then he looked at the lock, turned to the final number, and opened the lock.

"Pastor, your faith is awesome," the secretary marveled.

"I know," the pastor replied, wondering if he should tell her the number is on a piece of tape on the ceiling.

—via Rev. Karl R. Kraft
Glassboro (NJ) UMC

Quotable Quotes

"What Job needed most was not an explanation of suffering, but the assurance that even in the midst of suffering, there is a God who is with us and for us and will never let us go."

F. Buechner, Secrets in the Dark, Harper, 2006, 168.

"God chooses and is closest to the despised, the castoffs of the race, the one single abandoned wretch. He hates this business of the pyramid."

S. Kierkegaard, Provocations, Orbis, 2009, 364.

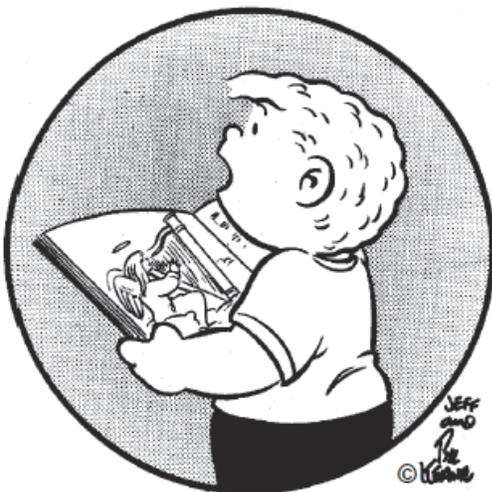
"Laughter has been implanted in our soul that the soul may sometimes be refreshed."

—John Chrysostom (407 AD)

"Laughter is the closest thing to the grace of God."

—Karl Barth

THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Jeff & Bil Keane



"When I get to Heaven, will I HAFTA play a harp – or will God let me play a drum?"

from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*
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Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with October birthdays!

Raquel Timonio	10/1
Elpidio Badua	10/1
Jermic Shuru	10/1
Bernice Kau	10/2
Carole Fujishige	10/5
Rebecca Steffey	10/6
Jamie Chock	10/8
Daniel Tyau	10/8
Michelle Ramos	10/9
Mia Starkman	10/9
Inorie Eichy	10/9
Daniel Oshiro	10/9
K. O. Eichy	10/10
Fane Lino	10/11
David Kleinschmidt	10/12
Teiti Correa	10/12
Beryl Goo	10/14
Nora Blaisdell	10/14
Rayne White	10/14
Judith Kokubun	10/15
Shane Kealoha	10/15
Shigeru Awakuni	10/17
Maileen Cardenas	10/18
Kolby Batangan	10/18
Victor Noket	10/19
Elaine Gierlach	10/20
Donovan Young	10/20
Jayden-Ryan Ruz	10/20
Jonson Jong	10/21
Suzanne Shak	10/21
Dennis Akauola	10/22
Collette Arakawa	10/24
Katherine Crosier	10/24
Luciana Sarceda	10/25
Antor Raymond	10/25
Alex Nagamine	10/25
Ariel Badua	10/26
Tate Anderson	10/26
Esther Tyau	10/29
RaeLynne Steffey	10/29
Betty Awakuni	10/30
Lydia Vallejo	10/30
Kris Sorcey	10/31

Bishop Bob's Visit to St. E's

On Sunday, September 12th, nearly 250 of us welcomed Bishop Robert Fitzpatrick on his annual visit to St. Elizabeth's where he celebrated Holy Communion, performed the sacrament of Holy Baptism, and led our children's choir on a march around the church!

A delicious brunch followed. Thanks to all who cleared, cooked and served!



Celebrating the Lord's Supper were (left to right): Father Saimone Lino, Father David Gierlach, Bishop Bob Fitzpatrick, Father Peter Fan, and Mother Imelda Padasdao.



The Steffey family is shown above with Bishop Bob Fitzpatrick and Father David.

Welcomed into the Lord's Family

on September 12th were **Raelynne Steffey, Shellianne Steffey, Charley-sue Steffey and TJ Thomas** through the waters of Baptism.

Received into membership were **Charles and Rebecca Steffey, Iosefo Filipino and Felili Filipino**. Welcome to all!



Diocesan Convention

The 42nd Annual Meeting of the Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Hawai'i will be held at St.

Andrew's Cathedral on October 30, 2010, Saturday, 8 am.

St. Elizabeth's delegates are: **Laura Iwami, Fran Kramer, Preston Lentz, Christine Ling and Arleen Young**. Alternates are **Gretchen Jong and Nancy Au**.

ECW delegates are **Nancy Au, Faith Chock, Gretchen Jong and Pearl Kau**.

From the Finance Committee

We are encouraged by last month's collections which reflect a gain over last year at this time. Some of the gain is attributed to guests at our Sunday services. Thanks to all who have increased their pledges. Our monthly deficit, excluding a one-time off-budget soil testing expense, was down to \$5000. Let's keep up the good work and close the deficit!



The Sunday School children sang "We are marching in the light of God," a South African hymn, for the offertory.

Sunday School News



Out in the community garden, the children will add their loving nurturing, and are busy planting ‘surprises’... lots of love, sunshine and water, we’ll see what sprouts!

Blessing of RagDolls2Love



Children are shown at the blessing of the Ragdolls2Love that were lovingly stitched by the Aiea Seniors, a project shared by **Nora Kurosu**. The ragdolls, blessed as little ambassadors of aloha, were sent to Afghanistan and Iraq, where troops have asked for more ragdolls! The ragdolls sent to Afghanistan were sent to troops who had distributed ragdolls to children in Iraq on earlier deployments.

Thank you to all for the support St. Elizabeth’s gives to this project—your prayers and blessings go with each ragdoll!



In the classrooms, children are getting to know new friends. In the photo above, children of Classroom A are making pennants. All are on God’s Team!

Come visit the classroom and see their pennants! Over 20 youngsters regularly come to Sunday School.



Children in Classroom B with Miss Lillian and Miss Alyssa.

Hello, Mr. Scarecrow!



A scarecrow made by our Tongan friends is the newest addition to our community garden!



In Solitude

There is a peace here which surely must
 be rare,
 for it is very deep---it soaks into the bones.
 It steals in with the moon-filled night

and envelops this tiny stone hut---
 gently, silently.
 Peace. All sleeps. Enshrouded.

Listen---listen! Silence sleeps.

Even the cockroach crouches unmoving
 and the flame in the oil lamp
 is still---

Still.

My spirit stirs with wonder
 as God slips---

Almighty presence---
 into the domain of solitude
 and deeply, deeply enters
 every crevice and corner.

Gently, imperceptibly
 holds my soul suspended
 in God's mighty silence.

E. Gateley, In God's Womb, Orbis, 2009, 44-45

A Taste of St. E's!



Please reserve

Saturday, December 11 from 6-9 pm for the soon to be annual St. E's wine tasting, pupu eating and silent auction fundraiser. This will be our major fundraising event for the year, benefitting in part the **St. Elizabeth's Scholarship Fund**, so if you have items to donate for the silent auction, or friends who might have a timeshare weekend to give away, or a round of golf, or a Hawaiian quilt, or or or, please corral them for us!

Gretchen Jong is the chair of the Silent Auction event. You can reach Gretchen at 255-2493. We will provide a van service from east and west for those who'd like to come but don't like driving at night!

SPEED BUMP by Dave Coverly



from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*
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September Attendance

9/1	Wed. Eucharist	16
9/1	Ilokano Service	40
9/5	Sunday 8:15 am	153
9/5	Ilokano Service	23
9/8	Wed. Eucharist	16
9/12	Sunday 8:15 am	237
9/12	Chinese Service	6
9/15	Wed. Eucharist	13
9/19	Sunday 8:15 am	153
9/19	Chinese Eucharist	7
9/22	Wed. Eucharist	13
9/26	Sunday 8:15 am	195
9/26	Chinese Eucharist	6



Support St. E's when you shop on-line!!

As Roy Chee says, a growing congregation needs a growing source of funds! To help do just that, St. E's is now participating with Andy Ching's **Market America** group. Follow the steps below next time you shop on line. AT NO COST TO YOU (in fact, there is CASH BACK TO YOU!), when you shop this way on line, the merchant you buy from rebates a percentage of the purchase to St. E's. YOU get a price you want to pay, the MERCHANT gets a tax write-off and ST. E's gets a donation. Seems like a WIN, WIN, WIN, all the way around. The more folks who shop this way the more donations St. E's receives. If you feel inclined, please invite your family and friends to shop this way too! So, here's how to do it:

Support Increased Funding for St. Elizabeth's

ALWAYS do your shopping online by typing "**marketamerica.com/stelizabeth720**" in the address bar in any search engines such as Internet Explorer, Mozilla, Google Chrome, Safari, etc.

Make certain you see "**You are shopping on the Saint Elizabeth's Episcopal Church Portal**" on the upper right hand corner first.

To sign on as a Preferred Customer of St. Elizabeth's by clicking "**Sign me up to earn cash.**"

Provide your email address and create a password for this specific email.

Continue to provide simple information about you.

Follow the prompt to continue to finish the process.

If registering is successful, you shall see "Welcome, your name" at the top of the web page.

CONGRATULATIONS! It is done.

Important: To make certain you do receive all the benefits shopping online through this shopping site, your must see YOUR NAME at the top of the page, as well as "**You are shopping on the St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church Portal**" at the upper right hand corner.

Please click on "**Invite your friends**" to become Preferred Customers as well and to do their shopping online to support St. Elizabeth's!

Remember: You earn at least 2-35% cash back when shopping online AND you can earn 1/4% on your referral's total purchases shopping online as well.

For further assistance, you are welcome to contact: Andy Ching, 258-6585 cell or email: andy_ching540@msn.com

Birthday Concert

Parish Administrator **Katherine Crosier** will be giving a concert called "If music be the food of love," on Monday, Oct. 11th at 7:30 pm at the Lutheran Church of Honolulu, 1730 Punahou Street. She and husband, Carl Crosier, will celebrate milestone birthdays by performing music for two organs, violin and organ, flute and organ, trumpet and organ, viola and harpsichord, and violin and piano— all with musical colleagues from the former Honolulu Symphony. A special treat will be soprano Georgine Stark singing a rousing rendition of "He's got the whole world in his hands." The Lutheran Church of Honolulu Choir will also perform.



The public is cordially invited to attend. A reception will follow the concert.



Humor for the hard times

Sign outside Cambridge (IA) United Methodist Church:

"Need a new look? Get a faith lift here!"
—via Pastor Dale Schoening, Bussey, IA

St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church
720 N. King Street
Honolulu, HI 96817

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A House of Prayer for all People

Return service requested

Thank you, Charles!



A huge Mahalo to **Charles Steffey** for patching and painting the water-damaged hallway near the office. He also secured our entry space with a new lock on the red office door and put in new and improved lighting in the Chapel area. Thank you so very much!

We also thank **David Sunagawa** of Gima Pest Control for taking care of a pesky ant problem around the church. As a reminder, please do not discard food or drinks in the church wastebaskets, as it is an invitation for ants to feast!



Mark your calendars for the next

Spaghetti Dinner and Dance

Friday, October 22, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Come join the fun!

For All the Saints

Please join us for All Saints on **Sunday, November 7th at 8:15 am**. Please print clearly the names of loved ones' names you wish to be remembered **by Sunday, October 24th** so they may be printed in our All Saints bulletin