

"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

October 2011

Enough!

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The Reverend David J. Gierlach

You gotta love the Israelites in today's first lesson.

Here they are, having just been rescued from a slave's life in Egypt, having just gone through the fantastic plagues sent by God to wake up Pharaoh: locusts, frogs, rivers running blood red, and then, most stunningly, the passing over and safeguarding of the Israelite shanties and their children while the Egyptian mansions find their first born destroyed.

Very powerful stuff.

Yet here they stand today, asking that most human of questions of God; the question I'll bet you and I ask more than we care to admit:

"That's all well and good, God, but what have you done for me lately?"

The grumbling, once they are free, begins almost immediately.

"Better off as slaves!"

"Who is this Moses character anyway?"

And finally:

"Feed me!" they say as if with one voice.

Learning about a free life in service to the creator of all things will take much time, and the pruning of many people in their attitudes and understanding of life.

But, today, everyone must eat.

And they are fed.

With manna and quail, quail being the wilderness version of roast chicken.

They are fed every day their daily bread.

"Don't hoard it," God tells them.

If you hoard it, the manna will rot.

Instead, trust that today you will be filled, and tomorrow too, not by your planning and schemes, but by God's grace.

I think Jesus had this story in mind when he tells us the parable of the workers in the vineyard.

When you first hear it, the story seems totally unfair.

Some work all day long, others for less than an hour.

Yet, the latecomers are made equal to the ones who are there since dawn.

That's not fair!

That's not right!

Except when you stop and think about it.

Because the early birds agreed to the usual price: the daily wage, and that's what they get.

That denarius was the daily wage back then.

It fed a family just enough for a day.

Anything less, the family went to bed hungry.

So in the parable, everyone gets enough for his daily bread, whether they worked all day for it or not.

And the early risers object.

They don't argue that the latecomers should get less; they argue that they themselves should get more.

In other words, the early risers feel entitled to receive "more than enough."

The concept of "enough" has a tough go of it in our world.

In a country where the national motto often seems to be "He who dies with the most toys wins," in a nation where we cannot muster the will to house our homeless families, but everywhere you look



Rector's Message, cont.

are enormous warehouses right downtown whose only function is to store our stuff, when 49 million Americans live below the poverty line; well, what does a Christian do?

This story recently ran in the newspaper:

"Do you want these? They are so fresh," says Catherine, holding up a bunch of grapes she just pulled out from one of the trash bags piled up on the sidewalk. "Take this, man. It's good too," adds her friend Morlan, holding out a loaf of bread.

Though happy to have found something for dinner, both Catherine, 21, and Morlan, 19, wonder why some edible food is thrown out as garbage in New York City.

"They only sell this food to the rich," says Catherine pointing to the upscale grocery store that put out the bags.

Inside the store, the manager is visibly upset with Catherine and other young people who are stuffing their backpacks with fruits and vegetables from the trash bags. "They are picking up garbage," says the manager. "I don't know why they are doing this."

"I have zero cash right now, and no place to stay," Morlan said. "What do you expect me to do?"

Such scenes are becoming increasingly commonplace on the streets of U.S. cities, despite the enormous quantity of food that the world's most affluent nation produces every year.

Official surveys indicate that every year more than 350 billion pounds of edible food is available for human consumption in the United States. Of that total, nearly 100 billion pounds, nearly a third— including fresh vegetables, fruits, milk, and grain products — are lost to waste by retailers, restaurants, and consumers." 9/4/04, Inter-Press Service.

The truth is, this marvelous world, as God has given it to us, has enough for all of God's people.

Indeed, there is more than enough.

What today's parable calls us to is a surrender of our fears and anxieties that lead to the waste and hoarding and excess that so defines the world today, that so deprives others of their share in the bounty of God.

That surrender begins by doing the very simplest thing: it begins by paying attention to the miracle that is life on this planet.

In our scientific age, it seems so much is reduced to an explanation, and once explained, reduced to inconsequence.

A penitential prayer offered in Jewish homes at the start of Sabbath says this:

"Days pass and years vanish, and we walk sightless among miracles."

And I think that's what Jesus is coaxing us to ponder with his upsetting parable today.

The early risers missed what was in front of their eyes: the grace they received was the invitation to work in the master's

vineyard.

To work on behalf of the Kingdom of God is its own reward, since it is the work for which we were created from the very beginning of time.

To work in the fields of the Kingdom of God is to bathe in the grace of compassion, of kindness, of gentleness and of sharing.

Instead of welcoming that grace, the early risers clutch at their dollar; and by insisting on payment, stomp off without their reward.

It is said that in heaven and hell, all must eat with three-foot chopsticks.

In hell, they starve, because the sticks won't reach the mouth.

In heaven they feast, because everyone feeds each other.

Learning to live with one another, no matter when or how late each arrives, no matter from where each arrives, it is all vital training for living life in the kingdom of God.

Without that training here and now, when heaven is offered, some may walk away, because it's too strange a place to be.

Simone Weil said that: "God invites all the damned into paradise, but for them it is hell."

To prepare us for the Kingdom of God, Jesus invites us to wonder, in awe, at the abundance of God, the graciousness of God, the kindness of God.

Whether it is the rainbow that Noah sees as the sign of God's eternal covenant with humanity or the sweet air that we breathe or the miracle of plants growing to provide our food or the diversity and wonder of our sisters and brothers — lift up the veil and see the miracle of all that is — and in that seeing — in that believing — come face to face with the God who is always ready to give us enough.

Amen+

A Love Story

“I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face postoperative, her mouth twisted in palsy, clownish.

A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed. She will be thus from now on.

The surgeon had followed with religious fervor the curve of her flesh; I promise you that.

Nevertheless, to remove the tumor in her cheek, I had to cut the little nerve.

Her young husband is in the room.

He stands on the opposite side of the bed, and together they seem to dwell in the evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. Who are they, I ask myself, he and this wry-mouth I have made, who gaze at and touch each other so generously, greedily?

The young woman speaks. ‘Will my mouth always be like this?’ she asks.

‘Yes,’ I say, ‘it will. It is because the nerve was cut.’

She nods and is silent.

But the young man smiles. ‘I like it,’ he says. ‘It’s kind of cute.’

All at once, I know who he is.

I understand, and I lower my gaze.

One is not bold in an encounter with a god.

Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crooked mouth, and I am so close I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate to hers, to show her that their kiss still works.”

-Richard Selzer, M.D.



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with October birthdays!

Raquel Timonio	10/1
Jermic Shuru	10/1
Bernice Kau	10/2
Carole Fujishige	10/5
Rebecca Steffey	10/6
Daniel Tyau	10/8
Jamie W. F. Chock	10/8
Inorie Eichy	10/9
Michelle Ramos	10/9
Mia Starkman	10/9
Daniel Oshiro	10/9
K. O. Eichy	10/10
Fane Lino	10/11
David Kleinschmidt	10/12
Nora Blaisdell	10/14
Beryl Goo	10/14
Rayn White	10/14
Judith Kokubun	10/15
Shane Kealoha	10/15
Shigeru Awakuni	10/17
Maileen Cardenas	10/18
Kolby Batangan	10/18
Viola Arabe	10/19
Donovan Young	10/20
Jayden-Ryan Ruz	10/20
Jonson Jong	10/21
Suzanne Shak	10/21
Dennis Akauola	10/22
Katherine Crosier	10/24
Collette Arakawa	10/24
Luciana Sarceda	10/25
Antor Raymond	10/25
Alex Nagamine	10/25
Kjirstin Propernick	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



Ancheny Kom, wife of **Kazner Alexander**, is a new volunteer in Sunday School Classroom A. She helps the Chuukese students with English. Thank you, Ancheny!

Successful Work Day, Sept. 17



Any guess as to which is the Women's? and which is the Men's?

Thank you to all who donated a precious Saturday, Sept. 17th, to beautify the church and Shim Hall. In addition to replacing many missing jalousies in the rectory and Shim Hall, we stabilized a ceiling fan, cleaned the kitchen, polished brass in the church and painted both Shim Hall restrooms. We made

great strides in beautifying our grounds and buildings and all ate to the fill the very tasty bentos provided for lunch. Thanks so much to **Roy Chee, David Hirashiki** and **Preston Lentz** for a successful Fall clean-up!.



Sunday School News

With as many as 15 children and another 10 in Miss Sue's class, Miss **Jaime Chock** welcomes back Miss **Lillian Tyau** and has three helpers, Miss **Rebecca Kleinschmidt**, Miss **Alyssa Rodrigues**, and Mr. **Kaz Alexander**. Mr. Alexander interprets the Bible stories into Chuukese for the children. Mrs. **Becky Steffy** also helps with the Sunday school children in Classroom B.



Shown above is Kaz Alexander reading a story, just after the children finished eating watermelon.

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.

Remembering Kamakani

On Sunday, September 25th, we gave thanks to **Dot Mason** and the **Hawaii Community Foundation** for their contribution that allowed us to purchase this van. We got to know Dot as we prayed for her granddaughter, **Patreace (Kamakani)** who battled brain cancer. Sadly, she died. Patreace's beautiful face is captured on the back window of the van. Patreace's grandmother, Dot Mason, visited the children in Sunday School and shared with the children Patreace's illness and thanked the children for their cards and prayers sent in December last year, and how Patreace got to read all of them! We thank Dot Mason, not only for her very generous spirit but for her love and support she shared with Patreace and her family.

Dot Mason is shown with Father David.



Father David blessed the church van.



The beautiful face of Patreace (Kamakani) on the back of the van.



Shown above are (L-R) Mary Ann Lentz, her mother, Norene Alexander, and Dot Mason. Mary Ann's mother and Dot Mason are life-long friends.



The Sunday School children (and Miss Sarah) meet Dot Mason and remember her granddaughter, Patreace.

“All Christian life is meant to be at the same time profoundly contemplative and rich in active work.” T. Merton, The Book of Hours, 75.



United Thank Offering

United Thank Offering, often referred to as UTO, is a ministry of the Episcopal Church that provides a way for men, women, and children of the Episcopal Church to give daily thanks to God.

At the ingathering on Sept. 4th, St. Elizabeth's collected \$407 for UTO.

Thank you for your generosity!

Come Join the Choir!

Do you love to sing in the shower, in the car, in your head? How about joining the choir? Please join **St. Elizabeth's Choir** — no experience necessary, all languages welcome!



Rehearsals are **Thursday evenings at 7:30 pm at the Church.**

Bulletin Bloopers

The Advent Retreat will be held in the lower level of St. Mary's Cathedral.

The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new tithing campaign slogan last Sunday: "I Upped My Pledge – Up Yours!"



Tongan Handiwork at Funeral

A funeral for one of our Tongan sisters was held at St. Elizabeth's and the altar area, pulpit, lectern and piano were adorned with handcrafted tapa cloths and traditional woven mats.

Children's Letters to God

Dear God, Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy. Joyce.

Dear God, Please send Dennis Clark to a different camp this year. Peter.

Dear God, If you let The dinosaur extinct we would not have a country. You did the right thing. Jonathan

We read Thomas Edison made light. But in Sunday School they said you did it. So I bet he stoled your idead. Donna

Dear God, Maybe Cain and Abel would not kill each so much if they had their own rooms. It works with my brother. Larry

Insects

“I like insects for their stupidity. A paper wasp—*Polistes*—is fumbling at the stained glass window on my right. I saw the same sight in the same spot last Sunday: Psst! Idiot! Sweetheart! Go around by the door! I hope we seem as endearingly stupid to God—bumbling down into lamps, running half-wit across the floor, banging for days at the hinge of an opened door. I hope so. It does not seem likely.”

Annie Dillard, *Teaching A Stone To Talk*, 53.

RagDolls2Love in Afghanistan



These rag dolls were lovingly stitched and made by **Juliette Ling** and the Pali Seniors. The rag dolls were blessed and sent to Michael Tiongco who is from Hawaii, a UH ROTC graduate and mentored under 1LT Nainoa Hoe. Michael is now the company commander for Bravo Co. 3-21 Infantry, the Gimlets! Michael is finishing Nainoa's mission which began in Mosul in 2005 when Nainoa was the company commander of the same unit. Michael has an all-female team who were eager and happy to distribute the rag dolls and reach out to the children and families in Afghanistan. Michael and his company thank you all at St. Elizabeth's, as we thank Michael and Bravo Co. for their service!



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A House of Prayer for all People

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A Note To Our Readers

To you many hundreds who receive this newsletter but aren't able to join us each Sunday, please consider a quarterly gift to the St. Elizabeth's Pastoral Fund. Our church is located in Honolulu's inner city. We have as our neighbors many immigrant families whose day-to-day life is just figuring out how to get by. Our Pastoral Fund is used almost exclusively to help folks pay a part of their rent and part of their electric bill. We have too many houseless friends and too many living without power. Your contribution can help. It's fully tax deductible. Thanks so much!



David+



Attendance

9/4	Sunday 8:15	110
9/4	Ilokano Service	68
9/7	Wed. Healing Eucharist	27
9/7	Wed. Ilokano Service	32
9/11	Sunday 8:15	130
9/11	Chinese Eucharist	6
9/14	Wed. Healing Eucharist	32
9/18	Sunday 8:15	167
9/18	Chinese Eucharist	6
9/21	Wed. Healing Eucharist	45
9/25	Sunday 8:15	163
9/25	Chinese Eucharist	5

“Everything is changing... people are taking their comedians seriously and the politicians as a joke.”

—Will Rogers (1930)