

*"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

## September 2011 **Neutral No Longer**

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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

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*The Reverend David J. Gierlach*

Coming home from the first day at the Priory this week, my daughter asked: "What religion are people who don't believe in God?"

Scrambling to have some time to think that one through, I asked what prompted the question.

Her classmate did, it seems.

She announced in religion class that she didn't believe in God.

She said: "I am a neutral!"

Which, if folks got really honest, "Neutral" would likely be the biggest religion in the world!

"Sure, we ought to tip our hats toward the big man, just in case he's really there; but on the important stuff, the day-to-day decisions on living a careful, prudent, common sense life; I'll decide which way to go!"

That's what's at the heart of Jesus making Peter the rock of the Church.

Peter, fresh from being promoted by Jesus to top dog in the new church, follows the time honored tradition of our first parents, Adam and Eve, a tradition we continue to follow in our own lives and in our own nations right up to the present moment.

As soon as Jesus tells Peter what God's plan involves, Peter blurts out, in so many words, that God is all wet.

It really is remarkable how we human beings have such a corner on wisdom.

Peter is of course saying to Jesus exactly what the devil says to Jesus in the desert.

"There's an easier way."

"You don't have to deal with suffering and pain and loss."

The temptation to get to where God wants us to go, without enduring what is required to get there, is the central temptation of our times.

It was Otto von Bismark himself, at the turn of the last century, who said, to near universal agreement, that countries cannot be governed based on the Sermon on the Mount.

He promised the German people iron and blood as the way to their salvation.

Two world wars later, we know how well that worked out.

But Bismark wasn't alone.

Until today, it is iron and blood, not the Beatitudes, that run the world.



# Rector's Message, cont.

And so I sympathize with Peter.

I'll bet you do too.

How can we follow a God who calls us into a life that invites suffering?

How can we follow a savior who insists we lose what is most important, our very self, if we hope to find what really matters.

After all, doesn't God want me to be happy?

Doesn't God want me to be a productive member of whatever society I happen to be living in?

Isn't God mainly concerned that we all eat our peas, play by the rules, be nice enough to get by and then die and go to heaven?

Isn't that, after all, the drill?

When we read today's gospel, the answer, sadly enough, is NO.

God apparently could care less about my happiness.

God couldn't care less about me fitting in nicely to the existing social order, eating my peas, and all the rest.

And that's the startling message that the gospel has for you and for me and for the millions and millions who are neutrals.

Living a life grounded in faith has little to do with being pious or following rules or getting along or all the other stereotypes that faith has been saddled with (usually through the hard won efforts of religious people).

Nor does it have anything to do with the kind of submission that too many women have endured for too many years; somehow equating submission to the men in their lives with the sacrifice Jesus calls for.

Thankfully, many women today are finally coming to see that the sacrifice Jesus calls for is not humiliation at the hands of a macho husband, uncle or brother.

Instead, it is something like this.

A life grounded in faith starts with a God who comes to an enslaved people, a bunch of nobodies.

This God announces to a murderer on the lam (that would be Moses – you recall he killed an Egyptian and fled the country); he announces to this felon on the lam two words that forever change the course of human destiny: "I AM."

When Jesus rescues the apostles on the Sea of Galilee, as their boat is tossed by the storm, the literal translation as he approaches them is not: "It is I."

The literal translation is: "I am."

And it is "I am" that propels Jesus into the face of Peter, saying, in no uncertain terms, that what God wants for them, what God wants for women, what God wants for you, is neither safety nor compliance nor popularity, but freedom.

The freedom to risk security and safety by stepping out of line and following this itinerant preacher from the hills of Galilee, the freedom to lose ourselves in service to one another, the freedom to forgive rather than to hate, the freedom to embrace, rather than reject, the freedom to risk illness or poverty or even death, all because, no matter our doubts, no matter our fears, no matter our best thinking, our hope is in: "I am."

As one priest puts it: "The deep secret of Jesus' hard words to us in this passage is that our fear of suffering and death robs us of life, because fear of death always turns into fear of life, into a stingy, cautious way of living that is not really living at all. The deep secret of Jesus' hard words is that the way to have abundant life is not to save it but to spend it, to give it away, because life cannot be shut up and saved any more than a bird can be put in a shoebox and stored on the closet shelf." (B.B. Taylor, *The Seeds of Heaven*, 79.)

# Rector's Message, cont.

What Peter missed, what we often miss, is the last part of what Jesus says today.

The suffering and dying part comes through loud and clear.

But there is something else.

So quiet, we often miss it.

“In three days, rise again.”

“In three days, rise again.”

“The genius of the Gospel is that it includes the problem inside the solution. The falling becomes the standing. The stumbling becomes the finding. The dying becomes the rising. The raft becomes the shore.” (R. Rohr, *Falling Upward*, 159).

And so, beloved, “Let your love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor.” Rom. 12:9.

And you shall see, as surely as you sit here today, that “all will be well, and all will be well, and all manner of things shall be well.” (Julian of Norwich).

Amen+.

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.



## Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with  
September birthdays!

Jayden-Aldrich Romena	9/1
Rosemary Lau	9/2
Jazzy Benito	9/7
Colby Pacupac	9/8
Harrison Jong	9/9
Stephen Rowland	9/9
Stayden Randell Yee	9/9
Gretchen Jong	9/11
Mathson Meyshine	9/12
Mylast Alexander	9/16
Alyssa Rodrigues	9/17
Helly Obeti	9/18
Kellen Ho	9/19
Francis Nakata	9/20
Bill Eng	9/20
Esby Meyshine	9/20
Wai Wah Yee	9/21
Stuart Ching	9/21
Viliani Lino	9/24
Raymond Au	9/26
Matthew DeCosta	9/27
Polly Gifford	9/29

## 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+

# A Day to Honor Nancy Au

*Aunty Nancy's in the kitchen, yum yum yum yum yum  
And chocolate cake with dobash frosting, yum, yum, yum, yum yum.  
With a jello salad here, and a nacho cheese there,  
Here a bite, there a drink, Everywhere a mum mum  
Aunty Nancy's in the kitchen, hooray, hooray, HOORAY!  
(Sung to the tune 'Old MacDonald had a Farm')*

Sunday, August 14 after church, everyone gathered in Shim Hall to honor and thank **Nancy Shim Au**, for her many years of service as "Esther's Kitchen Queen." It was all a big SURPRISE, orchestrated by **Gretchen Jong** and **Nora Kurosu**. After everyone took their seats, the assembly joined in singing "For she's a jolly good lady," followed by the Lino, Gierlach and Yuen-Schat families singing, "Aunty Nancy's in the kitchen" (words above). While **Maile Nicholas** entertained us on the piano, Nancy was invited to first in the line for food. That's got to be a first!

After lunch, it was "Roast and Toast" time, with **Arleen Young**, **Father David**, and others getting up to thank Nancy for all she has done for St. E's. Nancy said it felt a little like she was listening to eulogies said at her funeral!

Then everyone got a chance to say "Thank you," in a multi-cultural way (see the cake below) and finally Nancy was presented with a bouquet and gift certificate.

*How many ways  
can we say  
Thank You  
to Nancy?*



## A Letter from Nancy



Dear Fr. David, the newly-appointed Esther's Kitchen Committee, and Members of St. E's Parish Family:

On behalf of the original Esther's Kitchen Committee (**Patsy and Stuart Ching, Jerry and Millie Goo, Lowell Ing, Tom and Peggy Ishida, Charlie and Judy Kokubun, Lillian and Gertrude Tyau, Pearl and Francis Kau, Dorothy Jung, Laura Iwami, Sarah and Jerry Bush, David, Nella, Sarah and Rebecca Kleinschmidt, Jimmy, Lani and Kama Kealoha, Richard and Wai Wah Yee, David Kaloi, Raymond Siu, Lynette Shim and family, the Chun Family Incorporated** and anchored by the 3 Angels: **Faye Tsukamoto, Dorie Horio and Sharon Oshiro**, plus a supporting cast of generous parishioners) we thank you for honoring ua at the Retirement Luncheon.

Past events such as Vine & Branches folding, luncheons, Chinese Christian Association dinner meetings, ECW gatherings, the annual Children's and parents



Christmas celebrations, spaghetti dinners, birthday and graduation parties, memorial service functions involved the entire “Village.” The success of these activities required careful planning, copious amounts of inspiration and perspiration!

We are deeply grateful to all of you who supported these functions and graciously prepared your delicious specialities. It was always refreshing and awesome to observe your generosity of spirit, time and talents to assist with the setting up, serving and clean-up duties. It has been a joy and pleasure to work alongside you. Please continue to lend support to the recently-appointed committee.

Thank you for this opportunity to honor the past 11 years as an extraordinary culinary journey. And thank you for your most generous Foodland gift certificate.

Special thanks to **Nora Kurosu**, recently retired **Mother Jodene and Kit Hawkins**, **Mother Imelda** and her mother, **Mrs. Padasdao, Caridad Badua, Bill, Alberta and Liesl Eng, David Hirashiki, Gretchen Jong** and the late **Elizabeth Wong** and **Walter Kau** for all their special support and contributions. And a great big mahalo to **Kathy Crosier** as well!

Sincerely,  
Nancy & Esther’s Kitchen Crew

## Brand New Space!

What was formerly our Youth Center has been remodeled into an attractive and functional classroom space that St. Elizabeth’s and the Honolulu Community Action Program (HCAP) will use for a robotics class, computer training for children and adults, and a fully-functional sound studio!

After months of peeking behind doors and hearing the sounds of hammer, saw, lights, camera...finally, action! The paint is dry, the tables and chairs are in, the equipment being tested, the postal service is now delivering the curriculum materials, ladders are still up ... the roof now has a



dropped ceiling and skylights, two rooms have been separated and now house computers... the Makai computer lab and the Mauka computer lab fully air-conditioned! And

not a *single* interior gutter dropping water into a trash can! Tom Tsuha, IT tech has done a great job setting up the labs with PCs and Macs. The floors are all fully carpeted.

Between the Computer labs is the Science Center (*pictured are Robert Piper, executive director, HCAP; Chad Iramina, executive assistant to Robert Piper; and Tom Tsuha, IT tech*) with a very high tech ‘smart board’ in the background and a nice and cozy reading corner with bean bag chairs for the younger students!

Volunteers are now being recruited for the STEM program (*STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics*) – you will work with **Chadrhyn Pedraza**, Harvard-educated STEM program manager and the teacher along with other volunteers to help students in grades 2 through 8. The center will be open daily Mondays through Fridays, from 2:30 to 5:30 pm. (Wednesdays 1:30 to 5:00 pm.) Please see Fr. Saimone or Fr David if you can participate in this great program at least one day a week, or even an hour a day – whatever works for you works for the Program!

And if you’re looking for the entrance...stop and smell the basil...look up and see the bananas (before the monkeys get it!) The HCAP Creative STEM Program entry door is right past the bananas!



The Mauka computer lab.

# Sunday School News

Summer adventures, travels, activities are all wonderful memories and now Sunday School has resumed! All children ages 3 through 12 are welcome to join the learning fun! Older children are welcome to help in the classroom and to receive acolyte training... OJT...(on the job)...

Fr. David is scheduling a communion class for children 10 years and older this year. Please sign up!

Also this year we welcome **Sarah Kleinschmidt** joining the dedicated teaching staff along with **Sue Yap, Seine Lino, Heather Manning** (2nd Sundays) and **Miss Ajaon** (music - 4th Sundays) in classroom A. In Classroom B joining **Jamie Chock** and **Lillian Tyau**, assisting we welcome back **Alyssa Rodrigues** as her volleyball schedule permits.



Please see Sue Yap if you have any questions or would like to assist in any way!

Thank you all for your generous donations of school supplies for the children in Sunday school and in the outreach program. Each year the list of school supplies gets longer and more is asked of the families to defer the costs of education! Unfortunately gone are the days when only crayons, scissors, notebooks and pencils were on the list!

So, thanks to all who gave so generously!

## Fun at St. Elizabeth's



On Saturday, August 13, the Diocesan Commission on Pacific Island Ministraties sponsored (and paid for!) a great day of basketball, games and food. Over 60 youth attended!

*“We are all of us Pilate in our asking after truth, and when we come to church to ask it, the preacher would do well to answer us also with silence because the truth and the Gospel are one, and before the Gospel is a word, it too like truth is silence—not an ordinary silence, silence as nothing to hear, but silence that makes itself heard if you listen to it the way Pilate listens to the silence of the man with the split lip.”*

F. Buechnar, *Telling the Truth*, 14.



## Attendance

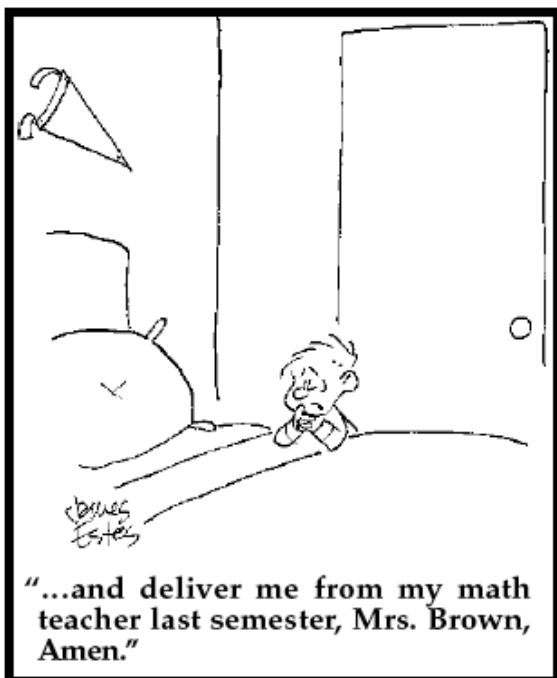
8/3	Wed. Healing Eucharist	32
8/3	Ilokano Service	28
8/7	Sunday 8:15	137
8/7	Ilokano Service	51
8/10	Wed. Healing Eucharist	32
8/14	Sunday 8:15	162
8/14	Chinese Eucharist	6
8/17	Wed. Healing Eucharist	42
8/21	Sunday 8:15	140
8/21	Chinese Eucharist	8
8/24	Wed. Healing Eucharist	29
8/28	Sunday 8:15	155
8/28	Chinese Eucharist	7



# Enlightenment

“Enlightenment is not so much knowing as unknowing; it is not so much learning as unlearning. It is a second and chosen naïveté, without forgetting all the contradictions and complexity in between. It is more surrendering than concluding, more trusting than fixing and all gratuitous grace, for which you can only give thanks. You cannot get yourself enlightened by any known program, ritual or moral practice. This drives the religionists crazy, but as Jesus said: ‘The Spirit blows where it will.’ (see John 3:8).

R. Rohr, *From Wild Man to Wise Man*, 35.



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# Listen

“O Holy One, I hear and say so many words, yet yours is the word I need.

Speak now, and help me listen; and, if what I hear is silence, let it quiet me, let it disturb me, let it touch my need, let it break my pride, let it shrink my certainties, let it enlarge my wonder.”

T. Loder, *Guerrillas of Grace*, 31.



# United Thank Offering

Through the United Thank Offering, men, women, and children nurture the habit of giving daily thanks to God. These prayers of thanksgiving start when we recognize and name our many daily blessings. Those who participate in the United Thank Offering have discovered that thankfulness leads to generosity. UTO combines these generous offerings to fund significant projects that make a real difference in the work of the Episcopal Church and in the Anglican Communion and a real difference in people’s lives.

We will have the United Thank Offering gathering at St. Elizabeth’s on **Sunday, September 4.**

# Bulletin Bloopers (or not?)

The pastor will preach his farewell message, after which the choir will sing, “Break Forth Into Joy.”

Low Self-Esteem Support Group will meet Thursday at 7 to 8:30 p.m. Please use the back door.

For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery down stairs.

# Come Join the Choir!

Do you love to sing in the shower, in the car, in your head? How about joining the choir? We are forming a **St. Elizabeth’s Choir** — no experience necessary, all languages welcome!



Rehearsals are **Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm at the Church.**

St. Elizabeth's Episcopal Church  
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Honolulu, HI 96817

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Mark your calendars for the next Church Work Day,

**Saturday, September 17, 8:30 am.**

We have an ambitious work schedule to spruce up the Shim Hall restrooms by power washing and painting the dark and dingy partitions — let's change that with a new coat of paint!

Experienced painters are needed for a one-application paint job in a three-hour period. We'll also spray the inside and outside of Esther's Kitchen to eradicate an ant problem.

Finally, we'll replace the jalousie glass windows in Shim Hall and the Rectory, mount two chapel door plaques, and pick up trash outside the fence (especially on Kanoa Street) and parking lot. Everybody's help is needed from 8:30 am to 12:00 pm. Many hands make light work! Please sign up if you can help!



## **See any Monkeys?**

The bananas are almost ready! Don't let any monkeys into our community garden!

Along with the bananas, our latest crop of Okinawan sweet potatoes is ready to harvest.