

"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

December 2019

ADVENT

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 Dr.
Gerald G. Gifford.
Rector Emeritus

The Reverend Peter S. M. Fan,
Cantonese Language Priest

Hsiao Ying "Ajaan" Chen
Choir Director

Marie Wang
Organist

Bill Slocumb
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Ken Yamasaki
Senior Warden

Charles Steffey
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Fred Rogers, known to most of us as Mr. Rogers, died over 16 years ago.

And yet, these days he's the subject of a major motion picture, a lengthy article in last week's Sunday New York Times magazine, and the topic of discussion on a whole variety of talk shows and news articles.

How strange that in this age of Trump, when lies and power and name calling are all the rage, that a man so incredibly simple and gentle should become the talk of the town, nearly two decades after his death.

According to the Times:

"Fred Rogers was a curious, lanky man, six feet tall and 143 pounds (exactly, he said, every day; he liked that each digit corresponded to the number of letters in the words 'I love you') — he was utterly devoid of pretense." NYT Magazine, 11/24/19, 48.

His whole aim in life was to let other people know, children yes, but adults as well, that "I like you just the way you are."

He was particularly distressed at TV commercials that are aimed at children, because the hidden message in all of them is that you aren't good enough if you don't eat this cereal or have this doll or visit this or that special place.

Fred Rogers insisted that every child was fine, just as they are.

He paid attention to people and things on the margins, often collecting discarded items that to most seemed nothing more than junk.

His favorite quote comes from the book entitled *The Little Prince*, which says: "What is essential is invisible to the eyes."

He closed his commencement speech at a college one year with a song, that I will not sing for you, but here are the words:

It's you I like. It's not the things you wear It's not the way you do your hair But it's you I like.

The way you are right now The way down deep inside you Not the things that hide you Not your degrees They're just beside you.

But it's you I like Every part of you Your skin, your eyes, your feelings Whether old or new.

I hope that you'll remember Even when you're feeling blue That it's you I like It's you yourself It's you- It's you I like!

Why wax on about Mr. Rogers this first Sunday of Advent?

Perhaps because he understood better than most what the message of Advent is all about.

He understood that it is from the seeds of self-hate and self-pity that so much of the world's evils grow; he understood that self-loathing is the springboard from which we loath others, feel alienated from others, and therefore attack others.

Advent is God's call to us to prepare to come home, home to a kingdom where lions and lambs sleep together, where we live in love with one another, where competition is finished and all need for anger comes to an end.

Who understands these things better than a child who knows that she is loved?

Which is why Jesus constantly reminds us that if we wish to enter his kingdom, we need to become like children.

If you listen carefully to the readings these four weeks, what you will hear over and over is that getting ready for the end times is all about returning to that which really matters in life.

Advent is about our return to the essentials - which Mr Rogers grasped in God's singular message to us all: "I like you, just the way you are."

That of course was the brilliant insight of the short story written by F. Scott Fitzgerald entitled The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.

That story, later a movie, tells of a fellow born as an old man, who spends his entire life getting younger and younger, so that when he dies in old age, he looks just like a new born child.

Spiritually — we are all called to be Benjamin Buttons.

We are all of us invited to live in the midst of all the muck and mud life has to throw at us — while at the same time growing into an innocence and trust that only a child can possess.

This is Advent!

It is our time to reconnect with the truth of who we are in the eyes of God, a connection that then allows us to be truly human with one another.

It's the time of the year to once again remember that: "You are accepted. You are accepted by that which is greater than you, the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later.

Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything. Simply

accept the fact that you are accepted." P. Tillich.

Advent is the season that invites quiet contemplation of these questions:

What happens to me when I really and truly come to a place of peace about who and what I am?

What happens when I finally like myself?

Attitudes and beliefs that used to suffocate me begin to drop away. Big shotism, a symptom of feeling ashamed or afraid inside, slips away.

Anxiety over what the future holds, resentments over past injuries, these all slip away.

Advent is our time of letting go of everything that gets in the way of embracing this fundamental truth of our relationship with God: that God likes and accepts us, just as we are.

All of which frees us to jump into our lives and this world and the needs of others with a freedom and abandon we may never have known before.

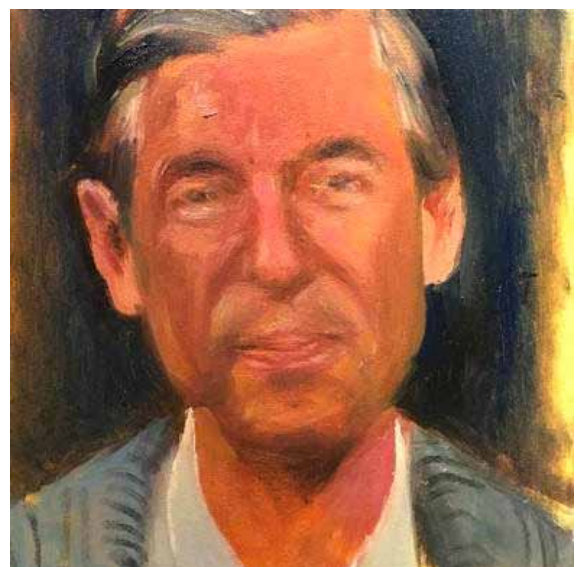
Set free from worry and neurosis and guilt, we find before us a new day! And right there sits the wonderful irony of the Advent of God!

As we spend week after week listening to gospel lessons about the end of the world and the second coming of our Lord in great glory and majesty and power, who greets us when all is said and done, but the babe, in a manger?

This is Advent!

May yours be blessed with innocence and hope and love.

+amen





Fr. Mafi not only translates the Book of Common Prayer into Tongan and writes hymns for the Tongan choir, he and wife Saane also keep the church grounds looking great with weedwackers and rakes and yes, a lotta well earned sweat!!!!!!!!!!!!



“The question for me, as peacemaking came to be a question, was one of soul, of center.

Peacemaking did not require a charismatic leader or a resplendent public personality, though that might occur. The soul of peacemaking was simply the will to give one's life.”

Dan Berrigan



Happy Birthday

God's blessings on those with December birthdays!

Jeffrey Starkman	12/01
Gillian Batangan	12/02
Cheryl Mitsuka	
Alan Scroggie	
Peter Fan	12/03
Charles Steffey	12/04
Nip Repaky	
ShellieAnne Steffey	
Dexin Lu	12/06
Kais Eis	12/08
Christopher Lau	12/10
Lynn Pascua	12/11
Glory Ann Tokomaata	12/17
Jonathan Lau	12/18
Carla Pacupac	12/19
Carol Abe	12/20
Kaylen Hayashi	
Jacque Gierlach	
Christine Toli	12/21
Catherine Chan	
Elizabeth Chan	
Susan Won	12/22
Gelacio Timonio	12/23
Delphine Shea	
Aiden Arakawa	
Lisa Arakawa	12/27
Laureen Zane	12/28
Rally Muludy	12/29
Aaron Arakawa	12/30
Ieichy Mako	
Mildred Goo	12/31
Otega White	
Saimone Neset Jr.	





Our pals **Peggy** and **Anne** are back for a visit from Oakland and of course they show up to help chop, stir mash and serve on Saturday's breakfast!!!! **Charles** and the rest of us are always happy to welcome them back!!!



Uncle Charlie noticed a huuuuuuge fly in the kitchen (wing span of say 6 feet at least....) (we NEVER exaggerate)..... so out came da super killer fly swatter!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



What a wonderful gift we received from **Lori Matsushige** who gave us a brand new commercial refrigerator! Thanks to **Lynette Shim** and **Charlie Kokubun** asking around at their Contractor's Ass'n gathering, Lori offered this wonderful surprise!! Thank you!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Faith is not about
everything turning
out okay.

Faith is about being
okay no matter how
things turn out.



What a blast as a
uuuuge gang showed
up to steam strip and
pack turkey rice corn
stuffing gravy and pie
for 250 friends in
need!!!!

A good time was had
by all and we are
most thankful for
everyone!!!!



Sunday School News...



This month, the children are busy participating with the lighting of the Advent wreath and giving campaign to our friends in Kenya!

Every Sunday in Advent - the Sunday School opens the service with a reading and song lighting a candle on the advent wreath before going to Sunday school.

The first candle symbolizes HOPE, the second represents FAITH, the third, which is pink, symbolizes JOY, the final week in Advent, the 4th candle symbolizes PEACE - angels message Peace on earth, goodwill to men! The white candle in the middle is light on Christmas Eve - Christ candle!

The wild beasts scampered into the aisle collecting donations for Kenya!



Thank you to the kids, parents, grandparents and our ohana so generously giving and participating in this special time helping our friends and each other!

Thank you all for your support throughout the year reaching out to the Sunday School!

The Sunday School will be in recess December 29th and January 5th. Classes will resume on the First Sunday after Epiphany, The Baptism of our Lord - January 12, 2020.

Blessed Advent to all.

Sue Yap, Lisa Anne Mitsuka Chan, Del Shea, Jamie Chock and Lillian Tyau



Da Youth Report

Hello December



Every holiday season sparks a certain feeling inside all of us. There's something about those Christmas lights, and holiday songs that brings forth childhood memories that fill our hearts with warmth. The excitement of walking in through the Christmas City lights at Honolulu Hale with your Ohana and watching the eyes of your keiki light up with joy, to watching the countless holiday parades across the island and finally waiting for the candies and Santa at the end. However let us never forget the promise of this season, The Birth of our Savior Jesus Christ being born and allowing us to be with family, partake in good food and drink, love and laugh and make memories.

On November 29th our Tongan Group in its 5th year represented St. Elizabeth's at the Kalihi Christmas Parade. With over 1000 participants, this year's Christmas Parade was a huge success!

Mark the date. Children's Neighborhood Christmas Party. December 21 from 10 am-2pm. Join is for Food, fun, shave ice, presents and lets not forget SANTA!



Congratulations to my daughter Alina Paulo as she enlists into the Hawaii Air National Guard. May God always be with you!

Youth Bible Study. 7pm every Friday night. Come fellowship with us!

Mele Kalikimaka,
Melanie Langi

It was another Saturday morning as we prepared breakfast with the houseless and our good God blessed us all with a painted sky of magnificent beauty A wonderful reminder that all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.



ST. ELIZABETH'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Please fill out entire card

clip and mail please

Pledge for 2020

Name _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

God has blessed me. I pledge to St. Elizabeth's for 2020 \$ _____ per week/month/year (circle one) to support the mission and ministry of my church.

May God give me the grace to do so.

Please check here if you would like offertory envelopes. ☐

Notes from the Catholic Workers

Wallyhouse Peace Garden

With thanks for grants from the United Thank Offering (UTO) of the Episcopal Church, the Atherton Family Foundation of Hawai'i and the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawai'i, our peace garden project is moving along with some wonderful surprises along the way. It is as if the site longed to become what we are creating and so it is more a matter of birthing than installing. While the project is close to the original schema, we have made a few changes as is common to the creative process. One significant change is that while our original schema called for raised beds made of wood and a concrete patio, we have reversed the materials so that we have concrete raised beds and a wooden deck! We felt a wooden deck was more earth friendly and the concrete raised beds more enduring.



Thus far we have constructed a deck that includes a stage area for community events, cultural and educational. Our six raised beds are in place and waiting for some good dirt and then planting. Near completion is an integrated hydro- and aqua-ponic system. And we have poured two sidewalks that are inclined so that the deck and garden beds are wheelchair accessible.

Left to do are the deck covering or awning, replacement of the fence, and planting.



Two coming additions are Christmas appropriate. We will have a statue of St. Francis, whose favorite feast day was Christmas. So much so that he invented the nativity scene in 1223. In a cave in the Italian village of Greccio, he had a living ox and ass attending to a babe in a manger while he preached about the wonder of God being born helpless and dependent just like us.

The entrance to the Peace Garden will have a Peace Pole that says what we pray for most intently at Christmas time: "May peace prevail on earth". It will be written in 8 local languages: Hawaiian, Tongan, Chuukese, Ilokano, Cantonese, Japanese, Samoan and English.

We wish for the community of St. Elizabeth's, far and near, to come and enjoy our garden. Play in the dirt, talk story, rest awhile. And may Peace prevail in all of our hearts throughout the year. Amen.

barbara, David and Niambi

"I don't think we'll ever understand Advent correctly until we see it as a preparation for a revolution."
~ Robert Baron

