

*"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

**May 2019**

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## Let It Be

*The Rev. David J. Gierlach*

"Don't hold on to me", the risen Jesus says to Mary Magdalene, "don't cling to me, don't grab me."

In other words, "let it be."

And in those three words is the secret of peace and joy and salvation.

We modern folks come to this morning so often with a million things on our mind, with plans and goals and needs and desires.

How to get that next promotion, or where's the money for my retirement coming from, or how do I deal with that obnoxious co-worker sitting two desks away?

Our lives, it sometimes seems, are filled to the brim with trying to control people, places and things; all for the best of reasons, all with the best of intentions.

Even our faith over these last many years often succumbs to these same temptations.

We have created a religion that all too often is about following the rules, or reducing our faith to good manners or to conforming with culturally acceptable notions of morality.

It's no wonder that God and Country becomes the rallying cry for those who loath the immigrant and who fear anyone who is different.

But this is not the faith that Jesus brings.

The faith that Jesus brings is centered on those words Jesus speaks to Mary in the garden: let it be.

That Jesus invites us onto a path of releasing fears, anxieties and control is shown to us from the very beginning.

It begins with Mary's "let it be," spoken to the angel who announces that she shall

bear the Messiah - an unwed, poor, young woman, who risks social shame and even death by stoning, if she agrees to this astonishing announcement.

"Let it be" she replies.

12-year-old Jesus remains behind the traveling pilgrims to go to the Temple in Jerusalem, only to be confronted by parents worried sick at his whereabouts, and when they find him and scold him with relief and exasperation, he replies: "let it be, I'm doing my Father's business."

And then there are the parables, those strange tales that at first glance seem to be cute stories, but sit with them for a while, and they will turn your soul inside out, parables about precious seeds thrown wildly on all kinds of ground, desperately needed coins lost, then found, prodigal children lost, then found, by prodigal parents — let it be.

These stories challenge our sense of right and wrong, our notions of justice and injustice, as he tells of weeds and wheat growing together,

of good fish and bad hauled up by the same net; of those who work the whole day long being paid the same as those who work for an hour.

Let it be.

The urgency to learn a life centered on "let it be" increases this past week, with Jesus taking on the role of a slave and washing Peter's feet over Peter's indignant objection, followed almost immediately by his arrest at the hands of an angry mob, with threats to



resort to the sword, an ear chopped off in anger, an ear healed with his touch.

Let it be.

Pilate, demanding from him, “the truth.”

Let it be.

Jesus hanging from the bloody cross.

“Father, forgive them, they don’t know what they are doing.”

Let it be.

Maybe living a life of “let it be” seems so hard because we fear that it will only bring loss and deprivation, perhaps even death.

But in Jesus, “let it be” means that two fish and four loaves of bread, easily feeds 5000, with plenty left over.

Martha sobs to Jesus that if only he arrived sooner, her brother would not have died ... only to stand moments later in jaw dropping wonder as Lazarus emerges from the tomb!

“Let it be,” says Jesus.

If we can develop the eyes to see and the ears to hear, we come to realize that God’s “let it be” opens a door from this world of apparent scarcity and fear and failure into a world where there is always enough, where the joyful shout is “Don’t be afraid!”

And most amazingly, “let it be” is what brings us this morning to the garden, a tomb once closed tight, containing the corpse of that crucified, blaspheming man, now open, now empty.

A woman is crying in shock and loss, wondering where they have taken him.

And in her bewilderment, there he stands.

She thinks he’s the gardener, perhaps because he has dirt beneath his fingernails; because God’s “let it be” is always spoken in the midst of real human life, in the midst of our Tuesday morning questions and Monday afternoon struggles and Thursday evening anxieties and wonders.

In Genesis, at the dawn of creation, God says: “Let there be” ... light, earth, oceans and animals, and finally, God’s masterpiece, human beings. God digs into the mud and brings out the first human being; breathes into it, and voila!

The image of God: this odd mixture of mud breathing the breath of the divine.

In Exodus, God digs all the way to the bottom of the Red Sea, parting its’ waters, as he leads the chosen people into a new land – into a new way of living.

God continues to have dirt beneath his fingernails as he takes care of the poor, the widow, the illegal alien — ensuring they have their most basic needs met, as he plucks from foreigners the powerful women who form the backbone of the lineage of the people of God.

And here comes Jesus.

His birth is announced first to shepherds, (who have more than just dirt under their fingernails!) – and his ministry lifts up the sick, the loser, the outcast, the blind.

In the ordinary face of Jesus, God comes to us in our ordinary lives – lives that face addiction and arguments; lives that confront death and cancer and heart attacks and hurt feelings and misunderstood emotions and pain from childhoods long gone — all of which create dirt beneath the fingernails of us all.

And into these our lives, Jesus says to us:

“I’m not here to say who is good and who is evil, who is right and who is wrong; I’m here to serve, I’m here to forgive.”

And if we are wise, we will seek to do the same with each other.

Let it be.

It’s when we refuse to “let it be” that our troubles begin.

Insisting on power and control, we dig for ourselves graves in which we bury, if not ourselves, then one another; graves dug for revenge or anger or fear or lost hope or anxiety or shame.....yet God continually and always and daily digs us out of those graves, restoring us to life, getting his fingernails dirty, even when we can’t see it, even when we don’t want it. Nadia Bolz Weber, paraphrased.

Let it be.

Still looking at him, still, not putting two and two together, suddenly the tension breaks.

He calls her name: “Mary!”

And hearing him call her name, she sees him again, perhaps for the first time. And when she grabs him, he reminds her: “Let it be.”

And she does.

Will we?

+amen



We are sooooo very proud of our man **Preston Lentz** who has at long last, after decades of serving as a priest undercover, at last made

it official and through the laying on of hands is now **Fr. Preston!** The ordination was beautiful, the church packed, and some of the many St E folks who were on hand to join in the fun also stayed for a delicious lunch and talk story time. What a wonderful day!!!!!!!!!!!!



*“Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love.”*

## Happy Birthday

*God's blessings on those with May birthdays!*

Richard Haller	05/02
Taylor Venenciano	05/03
Gerald Gifford	05/04
Evelyn Tyau	
Mermi Dereas	
Leslie Mitsuka	05/05
Kalisi Lavulavu	05/07
Michelle Lum	
Preston Lentz	05/08
Katherine Roke	
Jessie Hayashi	05/10
Margie Leong	
Felicidad Bueno	05/12
Inoleen Eichy	05/13
Liesl Eng	05/14
Rowena Blaisdell	05/15
Iwickson Este	
Chase Pacupac	05/18
Delia B. Martin	
Shirley Lau	05/22
Joseph Tolentino	05/24
Ruby Au	
Susana Baldonado	05/25
May Wai Hin Chock	05/26
Helen Tom	
Dwight Kokubun	
Reg Smith	
Marjory Tyau	05/28
Dorothy Jung	05/31
Jayden Shiroma	





Mo and Mel, the super duo, oversaw this year's fantastically successful Easter Camp!!! The youngsters had a blast with food and games and bible study and even a morning in the art studio!!!! Thanks to all the grown ups who helped our kids have such a great time!!!!



The little ones had a blast scooping up eggs that chickens of all kinds of colors laid and left all over the yard!



Beautiful babies, 4 of dem, were baptized on Easter Day!!! Congrats to all and their families!!!!



And wouldn't cha know, some lovely people paid us a wonderful visit too!!!!



And the Easter Brunch left everyone stuffed to the ears with fine delicacies from all corners of the earth!!!



Van Gough, Picasso and Matisse, MOVE OVER!!!! The new generation of arteezests is hard at work creating what will become signs of hope to be hung around lovely downtown Palama! (Ssshhhh, not a word to anyone cause maybe it's illegal..... mums the word.....)



Purdy sure this pic is the very definition of CUTENESS!!!! Our littlest ones show off their happy sign making skills (not happy, JOYFILLED!) at sign making!!!!!!!!!!!! You go gang!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

# Sunday School News

By Sue Yap



The start of Holy Week was awesome - our Palm Sunday parade, the children distributing the palms, olive branches and palm crosses to the congregation and then the parade behind steward and the acolytes with the cross...

Thank you all for supporting the children throughout the school year!

The 'Alleluías' of Easter rang loud, the light was passed on and shared with the love for one another! Easter Baptisms were special along with the children and youth singing the offertory hymn, This Little Light of Mine! The record number of children participating in the egg-citing, eggs-travaganza egg hunt was eggs-trodinary!!!! What a glorious day!!!

The children and youth will share their talents on Mothers' Day with all the 'moms' - the aunties, tutus, great-grand tutus... all the special women... singing the Offertory Hymn, What a Wonderful World!

The last day of the Sunday School year will be on Whitsunday, the festival of Pentacost - the 7th Sunday after Easter, which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples - June 9, 2019 with certificates and promotions!



In the summer, look forward to Miss Ajaon's Fun Music Program - dates to be announced later!

Blessed Easter!



And then the Sunday school practicing the offertory hymn for Easter - Kama worked with the kids for the Hawaiian verse! Awesome!



# Palm Sunday Parade!!



Palm Sunday is always a huge event here at St E's, with the only thing missing from our million (wo) man march was the donkey! Seems we took up the entire block to strains of Amazing Grace before heading into the church to begin the high holy days of the Holy Week!!!!!! Sadly, the camera crew was on strike during Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, but all of the services were really well attended and hopefully left everyone with a deeper sense of the beloved mystery that holds all of us so near.



Hello All!

May Day is Lei Day in Hawai'i! Welcome to May! We should have May considered the Month of Hawai'i because this is a time of year our 'Ohana and keiki celebrate May with songs and dance! Father David, can I propose for this? Hehehe!

But before that I just share with you folks the exciting time our youth had at this years Easter Camp. From Footwashing, the youth making Crown of Thorns out of paper bags and toothpicks, Painting



Inspirational sign with Barbara in her gorgeous studio, to CrossWalking (with an actual cross) where everyone who participated had a chance to carry the cross from Pua Lane onto Vineyard Blvd, down Liliha St and onto N. King back to the church, Stations of the Cross, Helping the Sunday School Color eggs, Sacrament, the youth also got their hands messy by making and baking Oil Lamps out of flour, water and salt, and Feeding breakfast to over 80 our houseless friends in the surrounding area, a family coming as far as Waianae(now that takes dedication)! What a blessing it was this Easter Weekend! Thank you to everyone for their love and support! Here are some pics for you all to enjoy!



And dont forget our exciting and hip hop Youth Bible Study every Friday night at 7pm. Bring yourself, bring a friend! See you there!

~ Melanie Langi

# NOTES FROM THE CATHOLIC WORKERS

## Opening Cupboards



It was one of those days. I got up on the wrong side of the bed, so to speak. Nothing was right. We had hordes of hungry people at the door, leaving no time to breathe much less keep up with the supply of food bags we needed to feed everyone. Normally, we have plenty of bags on hand, but not this day. That meant running over to the church to make more and more bags.



And those hordes, well not all of them but more than usual, had laundry for us to do. It was a day that in a normal week tended to be light with laundry. Not this day. It just kept coming in. And not only that, but Missy snuck in an extra load, by having her boyfriend bring it, and she left a blanket for us to wash at the door. We allow one basketful of wash per week, this gave Missy three loads. I like Missy. Her actions made me feel disappointed and abused.

What kind of day was this? I enjoy two cups of tea in the morning. The first while we say Daily Morning Prayer, the second after walking Angie, with breakfast, around 8:00a.m. On this day, it was 11:30a.m. before I poured that second cuppa. And David? It took him over an hour to eat his simple bowl of Cheerios due to constant interruptions. Poor guy had to eat a soggy mess.

We have the good fortune to have a daily morning helper from HCAP, Mary. Don't know how we managed without her before Fr. David offered us her services. But on this day, one of the knocks

on the door was Mary. She didn't come in, she came to say she had a doctor's appointment and couldn't help today.

What day was this? It was the day Notre Dame Cathedral was burning in France. Our hearts were grieving for the destruction and loss to a city, to a country, to the world.

Finally, lunchtime and our two hour break from door service arrived. Exhausted and dismayed, I sat at the dining room table picking at my food. My eyes landed on the cupboard door in the corner. In the 15 months we have lived in Wallyhouse, we never opened that cupboard. I tried once when we first arrived and it was stuck. Since there was no knob, I assumed Charley had sealed it closed and let it be. Now I was curious. What was behind that cupboard door? I grabbed a flat-head screwdriver and pried it open. It was an ironing board! In perfect condition. That may not be so exciting for most folks, but I am a seamstress. Ironing boards are an essential tool of the trade. I laughed with glee and for God's graciousness. In an instant, my black mood shifted to joy.

In the midst of the ordinariness, disappointments and trials of the day, something different and unexpected happened. My curiosity peaked. Instead of clinging to misery, I took the challenge to explore. The result? The opportunity to shift from desperation to elation. I imagine this is not so different from the disciples going about their ordinary lives, fishing, when they encountered the Risen Lord.

God is here, in the everyday, just waiting for us to be open to the unexpected. Look, it is the Lord! here in our lives and in the lives of those we encounter everyday. Happy Easter!

