

ho'oulu

"to grow...to inspire..."



December-January 2009



Priest's Post-Its

We have survived another annual meeting and even managed to hold it before January 45! Many thanks to all who agreed to serve on Bishop's Committee, Regional Council, Annual Convention, Warden, Jr. Warden, Treasurer, Sunday School, and Altar Guild as well as Music and Malama and our community outreach. *Mahalo!*

+These are trying times and are likely to get *even trying-er* before they get better. Let us remember who we are, let us remember the God who sustains us. May our God be even more apparent in these times of uncertainty and need.

+The Family Promise program continues to serve as a cornerstone of St. John's efforts to feed the hungry, house the houseless and comfort the afflicted. Our February rotation saw us sharing life with 20 folk. We are enriched by their presence in our lives...., no?

+We will likely be losing our dear **Leo and Melody** to the mainland (for seminary) this Fall. Not only will we miss their presence (truly), we will also miss **Leo's** tireless efforts on behalf of this journalistic masterpiece that you are reading. *Soooo*, here is the question: has the Holy Spirit tugged on YOUR (yes you) YOUR sleeve and whispered in YOUR (yes, really, you) YOUR ear to take the reins of this bi-monthly missive???? If so, please share your call with yours truly!

aloha, david+

Ko kakou Hokukula`a`ula (Our Sacred Guiding Star)

We are a communion of saints who worship Christ and serve others.

We embrace the Hawaiian values of:

ALOHA—We love and respect God and one another.

MANA—We respect the Spirit of God within each of us and all things.

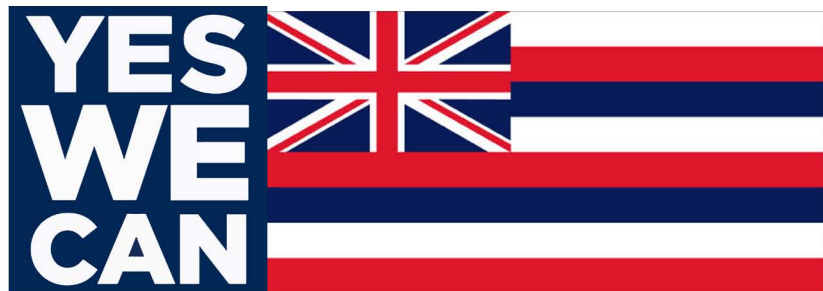
MALAMA—We are good stewards of God's Creation.

PONO—We are righteous and just in all our undertakings.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, 'Rejoice.'" —Philippians 4:4

Annual Avg.
Sunday
Attendance (2008)

72



St. John's Annual Meeting

2008

Our January 25th Annual Meeting marked the official end to a fabulous year where we've seen a lot of positive internal and external changes to St. John's.

We've slowly added different offerings to the church with a morning prayer and healing service and now an evening Bible study for "working folk". Votive candles placed near the altar now allow people to enter our church (anytime from 7 to 7) to privately pray. New benches have replaced our older ones. A permanent sign now welcomes visitors to our church.

Four members of St. John's are currently going through the discernment process—three for ordination, one for permanent diaconate.

In addition to church events, St. John's is continually expanding its reach into the community and the world outside

our doors. Family Promise and other smaller community events continue to make an impact on our community. We've opened our arms wider to our brothers and sisters in the Pacific, including Tahiti and Aotearoa. We've also held several successful fundraisers including our traditional luau and our first annual wine tasting/silent auction event what Uncle Lloyd calls our "haole luau".

Our humble church has grown in so many wonderfully unexpected ways, indeed. Mahalo to all for your support of the mission of St. John's by being both a spiritual space for members to worship God and to spread God's love into the community.

For those who were unable to attend our annual meeting, we've included the results of our elections for new officers, as well as excerpts from reports given by various committees of our Bishop's Committee:

ELECTION RESULTS

Appointment of Nahoa Lucas (as Senior Warden) and David Schofield (as Jr. Warden) by Fr. David Gierlach;
Bishop's Committee: Frank Embree, 3yr term;

General Convention: Delegates (Sandy Padeken, Mahi Beimes, Nahoa Lucas and Vicki Fay); Alternate (Frank Embree, Lisa Schofield, Lolana Festermacher, Tori Tualatamalelagi)

TREASURER'S REPORT

At last year's annual meeting I announced that St. John's would be forgoing the diocesan stipend of almost twenty thousand dollars in the year 2008. This was a leap of faith by the Vicar and Bishop's Committee that we could indeed stand independently financially. I am happy to announce that through the generosity of the congregation, and our fund raising efforts, we have come through the year past not simply in the black, but with

an actual surplus. This is a marvelous testimony to the health and spirit of our congregation.

I expect that 2009 even in the present dismal economic climate will be a successful year for us once again. The only big ticket item looming in our future is the rewiring of our church which will not come from general funds, but rather special funding which will be needed.

William S. Fay, Treasurer, January 20, 2009

MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT

The music program at St. John's By-the-Sea Church continues to evolve...Since **(John "JB" Bryan)** left for Japan in early February 2006, **Jennifer Perry** (right) became our regular accompanist. It was **Jen** who did the most with regard to researching and learning how to use the new digital piano that St. John's purchased in August 2006, including the various "voices" as well as the capability of playing MIDI files of hymns (like those **Dick Halverson** had created for us) and other music from MP3 players.



MUSIC MINISTRY REPORT, contd.

Jennifer also reorganized all the accompanist's copies of the hymns for easy use: a major job in itself!

Since she is now pursuing a demanding master's degree, Jennifer has ceded the "bench" to our new accompanist, **Ruth Shiroma Foster**, beginning January 18. We look forward to making beautiful music with **Ruth!**

Meanwhile the ranks of the "choir" as such have diminished, as some members moved to other churches (notably **the Besenbruch family**, and now **the Lino family** as well),

and others face serious health challenges. Of those who remain, several are unable to attend rehearsals prior to Sunday morning services. Although a few of us continue to meet for 8:30 practice, with so few voices we are unable to prepare and perform any new, special anthems. At the same time, we continue to explore new congregational musics from the various hymnals, including *Na Himeni o ka Ekalesia*, *Lift Every Voice and Sing: Wonder, Love, and Praise*; *Voices Found*; and even uncover hidden gems in the *1982 Episcopal Hymnal*.

Jan Rensel, Choir Director, Music Ministry

SUNDAY SCHOOL REPORT

In August 2006, St. John's By-the-Sea Sunday School began using a new program called "PowerXpress Bible Experience Stations." Each unit—Creation, for example—uses art, music, storytelling and a variety of other means to make the theme come alive. In addition to helping our children learn the basic lessons of Christianity taught around the world, St. John's by-the-Sea has added a distinctly local flavor. Music, Prayers and everyday words are regularly taught in Hawaiian and local crafts are introduced by our talented staff...

...Until a few weeks ago, **(Fr.) Saimone, Fane and all the Lino family** were the backbone of our Sunday School family. Their teaching and celebration of our faith culminated in the unforgettable Christmas pageant (see right) they produced. We rejoice that we were able to share their gifts, even for that short time.



We are more than halfway through our third school year, still going strong and proud of our successful first steps. More than twenty children have registered and seem to enjoy our mix of mini-worship service, snack, and lesson. We hope to see our present students more regularly and to open our doors to many more in the months and years ahead.

Vicki Fay, Sunday School Coordinator

“What kind of peace do I mean? Not a Pax Americana enforced on the world by America's weapons of war. Not the peace of the grave or the security of the slave. I am talking about genuine peace, the kind of peace that makes life on earth worth living... A world...where the weak are safe and the strong are just.”

President John F. Kennedy, American University, Washington DC, June, 1963



MALAMA COMMITTEE REPORT

Malama Committee has taken a pro-active role in the health of our church gatherings. We have been blessed with several additions to our inventory (such as more tables, chairs, outdoor tent coverage, a new storage shed to house them all and an additional refrigerator)

The revival of our annual Lu'au has called for these items to be purchased and the proceeds have allowed us the funds needed to purchase them. Another item on our wish list is to purchase our own 30' x 60' tent for our ocean-side lawn to have whenever we need more space. This will alleviate us from worrying about finding a tent to borrow.

We have also been blessed with another fundraiser event (see photos) that was held in December. A very successful venture we are describing as our "Haole Lu'au". The silent auction featured as our main income source was a total success. (Our traditional lu'au, on

the other hand) is simply that, traditional! It is who we are and it is a tradition we have continued to pass down through the generations. We have also been blessed with a couple of other smaller fundraisers. Our *Laulau* and *Kalua* pig sales were also successful. This too we hope to continue.

Because of the high desire of requests for lodgings at our hall, regulation has been agreed upon by the Bishop's Committee...*The active member of St. John's, who is the initiator of the request (to use the property for lodging) upon agreement of the BC, will sign the contract and will be fully responsible for adhering to its provisions. Basically it has been set that the hall will be treated like a Bed-N-Breakfast—only, no breakfast and more like a Bed-N-Shower. No cooking and hosting of guest. The costs for the use of Ho'okano Hall for*

the other hand) is simply that,

members (actually is regarded as a donation) is \$150 and for non-members to date \$400.

Members who are not able to prepare food but want to provide food for Sunday lunch have graciously given monetary donations.

Sandy Padeken, Malama Committee chair, Fundraiser chair



VICAR'S REPORT

+2008 marks our first full year together. I continue to be so grateful for the opportunity to serve among you, my friends of St. John's By-the-Sea. 2008 saw our average Sunday attendance increase to 72 (up from 55 in 2007). We have continued our Wednesday morning healing service and Bible Study and expanded it into a Wednesday evening Bible, beer and pizza night for the working folk among us.

+We have hosted quests from new Zealand on a number of occasions at the Ho'okano Hall and we have enjoyed worshipping with our brothers and sisters from *Aotearoa* as well. We have also hosted guests from Tahiti in what I hope will continue to be St. John's open door policy toward all, especially toward travelling Polynesians.

+St. John's continues to be one of the Family Promise anchor churches and *we now involve 12 neighborhood churches in assisting us during these quarterly events.*

+We were very blessed to have the friendship and ministry of **the Lino family** throughout 2008. **Fr. Saimone** worked closely with our youth, presided at the occasional service and lent his considerable skill to our Bible Studies. **Fane** and the children sang in the choir and made a beautiful noise to the Lord! **The Linos** have

moved on to St. Elizabeth's in Palama where **Fr. Saimone** will become more involved in a ministry to the many Micronesians coming to our islands. I am sure they will be back from time to time to visit with us.

+Our newsletter has become a bimonthly affair. **Leo Loyola** has continued his tireless work in that effort and our newsletter is a frequent object for praise from the wider community. **Leo** will be likely attending seminary in the fall so we will need someone to please consider taking on the task of newsletter coordinator. Any volunteers?

+We have four of our members in the process of seeking ordination to Holy Orders. They are **Mahi Beimes, Nahoa Lucas and Leo Loyola** seeking ordination to the Holy Priesthood and **Tori Tualata-malelagi** seeking ordination to the permanent diaconate. Please keep them each in your prayers. The preparation they are undergoing is difficult, challenging and long.

+We have continued to improve the physical church grounds and building. Last year saw the addition of the French Doors, church sign and air conditioning. This year, the long awaited benches arrived. The pews, thanks to **David Schofield** and others, will soon see new carpeting on the kneelers and repairs where needed. What's next is less glamorous but still greatly needed: to replaced the very aged electrical

system in the main church. It is estimated to cost between \$25,000 and \$30,000. It is over 60 years old and really does need attention. More on that as the year goes on.

+We are making efforts to expand the list of lay readers. All who feel called to this ministry: please let me know.

+We truly need some to volunteer for the altar guild. The current cadre could use some reinforcement.

+Both the lu'au and wine tasting fundraisers were stellar successes. We look forward to both of these events for 2009.

+We baptized Ava Bradbury, Noa Lemau, Jordon Tagaloa, Javian Talai-Goo, Louise Goo, U'ilani Paoao and Alina Holland.

+Rodney Taylor II and Leinani Tolentino and Pomaikai Paoao and Sheena Hillen were joined in Holy Matrimony.

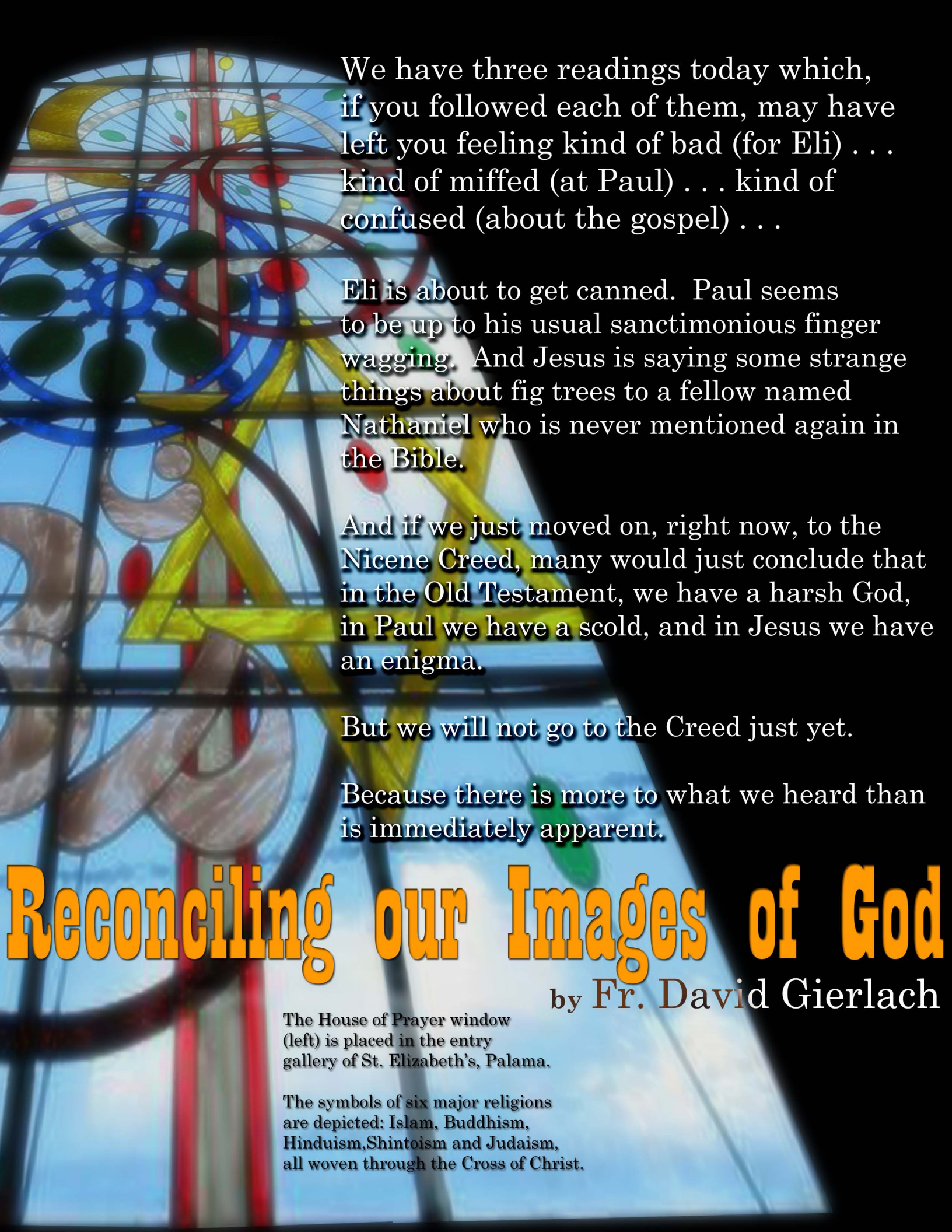
+Evelyn Hirose, Rev. Charles Hopkins, and Ronald Chadwich entered life eternal in 2008. May all the saints enjoy the nearer presence of God.

+We confirmed Tevita Lino, Joshua Lino, Kanoa O'Connor, Nalu O'Connor, Kapono Lucas, Kaipo Lucas, William Young, Nicolas Young and Shelby De-Costa.

May God continue to bless you and this, God's community of St. John's By-the-Sea!

david+





We have three readings today which, if you followed each of them, may have left you feeling kind of bad (for Eli) . . . kind of miffed (at Paul) . . . kind of confused (about the gospel) . . .

Eli is about to get canned. Paul seems to be up to his usual sanctimonious finger wagging. And Jesus is saying some strange things about fig trees to a fellow named Nathaniel who is never mentioned again in the Bible.

And if we just moved on, right now, to the Nicene Creed, many would just conclude that in the Old Testament, we have a harsh God, in Paul we have a scold, and in Jesus we have an enigma.

But we will not go to the Creed just yet.

Because there is more to what we heard than is immediately apparent.

Reconciling our Images of God

by Fr. David Gierlach

The House of Prayer window (left) is placed in the entry gallery of St. Elizabeth's, Palama.

The symbols of six major religions are depicted: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Shintoism and Judaism, all woven through the Cross of Christ.

The two testaments, the Old and the New, the Hebrew and the Christian, tell a story of God beginning the task of bringing us home. "Bringing us home" is another way to say "salvation."

These two testaments depend on each other. And we cannot understand one without the other.

The New fulfills the Old. It brings what began in the Old to fulfillment. In small ways and big. In ways we might miss, the New makes a point of completing the Old. Today we are given a wonderful example of that.

In the Old, Abraham had two sons, one by a Hagar a servant, named Ishmael and one by Sarah, named Isaac. Only one of the sons received the promise, the blessing, of God. There was exclusion of one in favor of the other.

Just so, Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. And only one, Jacob, received the promise, the blessing, of God. More exclusion. In the gospel, we hear from St. John about the very beginning of Jesus' ministry. Just like God's dealings with Abraham and Isaac begins God's involvement with the Jewish people, John's gospel begins with a call. In the Old Testament, we hear the stories of those two sets of brothers: Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob. And in John today, as Jesus begins to act in the world, we have, it appears, two sets of brothers: Nathaniel and Phillip and Peter and Andrew.

And here, both sets of brothers are called. Both sets of brothers receive

the blessing and the promise. There is inclusion.

This inclusion didn't end with these two sets of brothers. Remember Jacob and his ladder? The Bible study people know it well. (Wednesday mornings each week and Wednesday evenings every other week!)

But so much for commercials. Back to Jacob. It was right after Jacob ripped off that blessing, that promise, from Esau, that he ran away and fell asleep . . . a rock for a pillow. He fell asleep and had a dream. A dream of a ladder connecting heaven and earth. A dream of angels climbing up and down. And what we hear in John today?

In John today, the identity of the ladder is told to us. It's not made of wood or steel. The ladder, this pathway between heaven and earth, is Jesus. Jesus is the connection between heaven and earth. What was first seen, vaguely and darkly in a dream, is now made clear. And think of what this means. All that was made, all of creation, John tells us earlier, was made through the Word.

Think of what that means.

All was made, all creation, was made through and by and in Jesus, the Word.

Remember in Genesis?

God creating us out of the earth? The dirt? Then, remember elsewhere in John, Jesus made a mud patty from the dirt and gave eyes to the man was blind?

The creation of humanity. The creation of new eyes. All by the same

creator, Jesus, the Word of God. This Jesus who is the connection between heaven and earth. All heaven, all earth.

You hear it said over and over that in order to be saved, you must believe in Jesus.

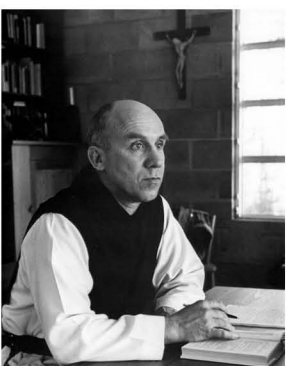
I think this is not correct. We aren't saved by our initiative, but by God's initiative. So perhaps it is not because we believe in Jesus that we are saved, but rather, we are saved because Jesus believes in us. And that "us" is not simply we Episcopalians.

It is not even we Christians. If Jesus is the creator and connection between all of heaven and all of earth, then the days of exclusion are over. This ladder between heaven and earth is for each and every one of us. The days of exclusion are over. What began with one people ends with all people.

What began with law ends with love. The new completes the old.

And this brings us to Paul today. It's easy to read Paul, and especially today's reading, as Paul the scold. "No fornication" he says 900 times. But as I've mentioned before, context is everything. The Corinthians he wrote to were trying to come to grips with the astounding truth brought by Paul. To the Jewish Corinthians, it was that the law was finished, fulfilled, in Jesus.

For the gentile Corinthians, it was all those sacrifices to all those gods, could end. Jesus, the Word, the revelation of God, is the truth. The new law, the new obligation, if you will, is this: love one another.



“ Christian hope begins where every other hope stands frozen stiff before the face of the Unspeakable.”

Rev. Thomas Merton

Now you can imagine how easy that could be misinterpreted? Misunderstood? Misapplied?

Paul's rant about fornication today was directed exactly at those who understood "love one another" in a way that was not quite intended.

What Paul brought in this profound announcement that law and idols were finished, in this profound announcement of love for one another was a call to us all to grow up. To become adult children of God. To learn a mature, balanced, forgiving, grown-up love, strengthened by the spirit of God that created this love in the first place.

"Love one another" doesn't mean everyone sleeping with everyone else! He told the Corinthians — he tells us. It means coming to believe that in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, I am loved by God. You are loved by God.



At St. Elizabeth's in Palama, they have a large stained glass at the back of the church showing in symbols all of the faiths of the earth. Very frankly, I didn't much like it when I was there. I thought: "We are an Episcopal Church, a Christian church, not the UN!"

But I have since come to see that the elderly man who created that window was light years ahead of me in faith. He

understood, as Paul understood, as Jesus understands, that we human beings excel at nothing so much as dividing ourselves into teams. We divide ourselves into teams and we call those teams "race" and "religion" and "gender" and "class" and "wealth" and on and on and on. And the teams become idols — and the idols are worshiped. All in the face of a God, the author of life, who made us all, who redeemed us all, who loves us all . . . asking only of us that we do the same.

There is no more "us" and no more "one who is chosen" and "one who is excluded". No more male and female. No more Jew and Greek. No more slave and free. But all are one in God's love.

Today we might say: no more Christian or Muslim. No more gay and straight. No more male and female. But all are one in this new creation being born even as we sit here today. So Paul was not being the nag. Paul was doing his level best to help this new community come to see, come to

believe, that the freedom we are given is grown-up freedom, not anything less.

Last week, one of our members asked me to preach about the theology of non-violence. And I thought, having finished this week's sermon — oh well, maybe next week. Yet, in fact, I have preached to you today the theology of non-violence. If God, in Jesus, the Word, has created us all and loved us all and redeemed us all; if it is true, as the ancient hymn says: "From lands that see the sun arise — to earth's remotest boundary, we sing our praise of Christ the king born of Mary, virgin pure."

"Though blessed author of the world, he put a servant's body on; that liberating flesh by flesh, he might not lose those whom he made;" Sedulous (c.450 CE), who did he make but all of us? From the rising sun to the earth's farthest shore.

Every nation.

Every race.

Every creed.

Every one.

Stanley Hauerhaus, a theologian, wrote an article entitled "First, Let's Stop Killing Christians". A lot of people got mad at that title. His point was that if we obviously find it so hard to stop killing each other, may be we can practice on just not killing our brothers and sisters in faith.

Yet, if we take our faith seriously, we really can't kill anyone. Because we are all of us brothers and sisters not only in faith, but in fact. That is the fulfillment of the Old in the New Testament.

Where one was chosen before, today, all are saved. Where there was once exclusion, now, the author of life sweeps us all into his net. And we are called to lift up our heads, to embrace the freedom that comes from forgiveness, and to take our place at the banquet of the Kingdom of God. Yes, all of us.

It is the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament here in the New.

The training wheels are off the bike.

Now, we are invited to ride with balance and calm.

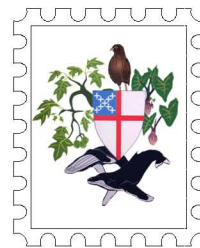
Ride well, my friends. Ride well.

Amen+





St. John's By-the-Sea Episcopal Church
47-074 Lihikai Drive
Kaneohe, HI 96744



Vicar: The Rev. David Gierlach

Church: (808) 239-7198

Cell: (808) 554-8281

Home: (808) 394-5222

Other office: (808) 523-1332

E-mail to editor: editor808@gmail.com



welcome to st. john's by-the-sea episcopal church

Sunday Service (Church Hall)
& Sunday School (Ho'okano Hall)
Starting at 9.30am

Wednesday Eucharist/Healing Service
Starting at 9.30am
(followed by Morning Adult Bible Study)

Evening Adult Bible Study,
Wednesdays at 5.30pm

Afterschool Children's Program/Youth Group
Wednesdays at 3pm



**MISSED OUT ON OUR
WINETASTING EVENT?**

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of this and more at

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