ho`oulu

"...to prosper...to inspire..."

[The Newsletter of St. John's By-the-Sea]

February 2008 issue

We are in the midst of our Lenten journey through the desert with our Lord. Let us take some time each day to pray, to reflect on the journey of our lives, to sit silently and listen to the still quiet voice that the Lord so often speaks in. At night, consider—alone or with others—praying the Compline on page 127 of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Please plan for our Holy Week services. Maundy Thursday, also Holy Thursday, falls on March 20, 2008. We will celebrate Holy Eucharist as well as washing of the feet. All feet are welcome...No feet will be turned away! We'll begin at 6:00 pm. It is followed by a soup supper in Ho`okano Hall. Please bring your feet and some soup for this blessed evening!

Holy Friday will have both a noon and a 7:00 pm service, which includes the Stations of the Cross. It is the most somber day of our year. A good day to gather together to remember how bad things can be. Yet with God, the bad and the evil—the "no" that we so often say to God, the "no" that landed Jesus on the cross, even that "no"—is rejected by God. God rejects our rejection of God in the mystery of the resurrection. Thanks be to God!

We will have an Easter Vigil service this year! Please sleep extra long these days because the vigil will begin an hour before sunrise! *Wink at me if you'll be there.* There's lots of readers needed as we retell the great stories of the Flood, the Exodus, the promises of the prophets, all leading to this mysterious and shocking day of Easter, the cornerstone of our faith.

We will also have the traditional 9:30 service Easter morning. It will, as usual, have a Easter egg hunt for the *keiki*, our famous St. John's By-the-Sea champagne brunch and lots of celebration.

Thanks so very much to all who have so selflessly devoted themselves to the building up of our community at St. John's! There are so many who give their time, encouragement, imaginations, muscle power, cooking skills, liturgical skills, child skills, musical skills, writing skills and more! The talents given by God are used well! *Mahalo nui loa!*

A *LAULAU* FUNDRAISER is in the offing! Please talk with **Auntie Sandy Padeken and Auntie Ipo Johnson and Uncle Gene Naipo** if you can lend a hand or a buck or some advice!

Please keep an eye on the SIGN-UP BOARD for food after the service. We always need one or two families or folk to bring something because worship burns A LOT of calories! Thanks to all who take care of keeping the rest of us so well-fed!

***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

The Bishop's Page

Bishop Bob Fitzpatrick paid his first official visit with St. John's By-the-Sea on February 3. During his visit, he had officially installed **Father David** as vicar and blessed the newly-installed doors at the church hall. He wittily commented on the boldness of our front doors painted Episcopal red—something that he was looking forward to seeing someday at an Episcopal church in Hawaii. During a luncheon after the service, he encouraged the congregation to consider planned gift-giving of their estate, designating the Diocese as a beneficiary. Such would enable a young vicar and his family to be able to live in Hawaii in lieu of a housing stipend. Doing so would not only be less of a burden to a church's finances but also encourage further growth of the Episcopal church. He also commented on and encouraged the steady spiritual and physical growth of St. John's, noting that it was within the "top 25%" in church size.

PHOTO: VICKI FAY

Bishop's Warden **Nahoa Lucas** (right) assists **Bishop Fitzpatrick** in installing **Father David** as official vicar of St. John's By-the-Sea.

Himself a "son of a carpenter", **Bishop Fitzpatrick** made some humorous comments on our red doors and "suggested future additions" to St. John's such as installing glass walls to go with the new French doors.

Sister Joan Chittester, a well-known author and speaker, will lead a workshop/retreat on Saturday, April 5, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Mystical Rose Oratory on the campus of Chaminade University and St. Louis School, 3140 Waialae Ave. in Kaimuki.

The morning session is entitled "God, Women, and the World: Telling the Story Another Way," about ecology. The afternoon session is "Women, Power, and Peace."

Sr. Joan will also deliver the Mackey Lecture, entitled "Spirituality and Culture," on Sunday, April 6, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. in the Mystical Rose Oratory. The lecture is free and open to the public.

The Saturday workshop is $15 in advance and $20 at the door. The price includes coffee, tea, and light refreshments. In addition, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian box lunches will be provided at no extra cost for those who register by March 31. There is no program fee for students, faculty, and staff of Chaminade and St. Louis, but advanced registration is still required for the free lunch.

For additional information, contact **Brother Dennis Schmitz** at 735-4801 (office) or 232-6691 (cell). Registration forms, with additional information at marianisthawaii.org

Sister Joan is the author of over 35 books and has received seven Catholic Press Awards in recognition of her work. Her most recently published book is Welcome to the Wisdom of the World. She has appeared on "Meet the Press with Tim Russert?" and "NOW" with Bill Moyers. During the papal funeral she served as a commentator for the BBC and the National Catholic Reporter for which she writes "From Where I Stand." (natcath.org)

Sister Joan served a term as President of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), and was prioress of her community, the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, PA, for 12 years.

*(Mahalo to **Sally Roggia** for this submission.)*

Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB – Workshop / Retreat
Saturday, April 5, 2008, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Saint Louis School/Chaminade University, Mystical Rose Oratory

Morning Session: God, Women, and the World: Telling the Story Another Way. This presentation deals with the premise that what people do or fail to do about ecology depends on what they think about themselves and their relationship to things around them.

Afternoon Session: Women, Power, and Peace. Women have been accused of being too emotional, and therefore unfit for leadership. If emotionalism is the ability to count the children who will grow up undernourished as a result of the havoc wreaked on civilian populations by the men of war, if emotionalism is the ability to weep over bodies left in the sun to rot, if emotionalism is the intelligence tit takes to count the years of work and life lost to warfare – then let's try that for a while. Let's try peace and let's give women leaders the chance to wage it.

Mackey Lecture
Spirituality & Culture – Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB
Sunday, April 6, 2008, 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

How does culture change? What implications does that have for contemporary spirituality? This is a presentation on the relationship of spirituality and cultural change—The call of Moses, global definitions for the seven deadly sins and a look at American society as we move forward in the 21st Century.

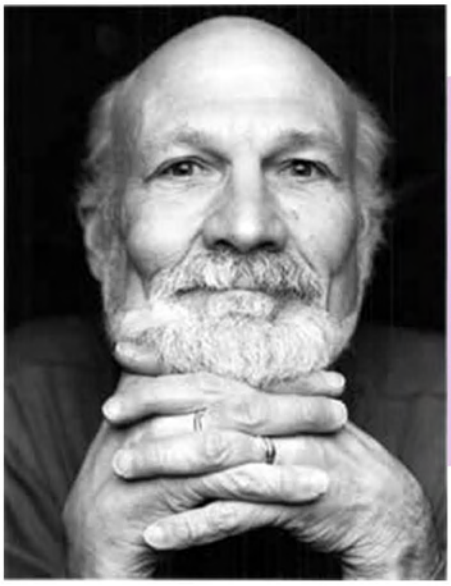
Lecture to be held at Saint Louis School/Chaminade University, Mystical Rose Oratory.

The Lecture is free and open to the public.

Despite what you may see of our newly–installed French doors in this photo, our doors are open every day from 7 to 7 for you to quietly spend some time with our Lord God... and of course we're here every Sunday morning at 9:30!

E Komo mai

Receiving God's blessing on 60 years of marriage!



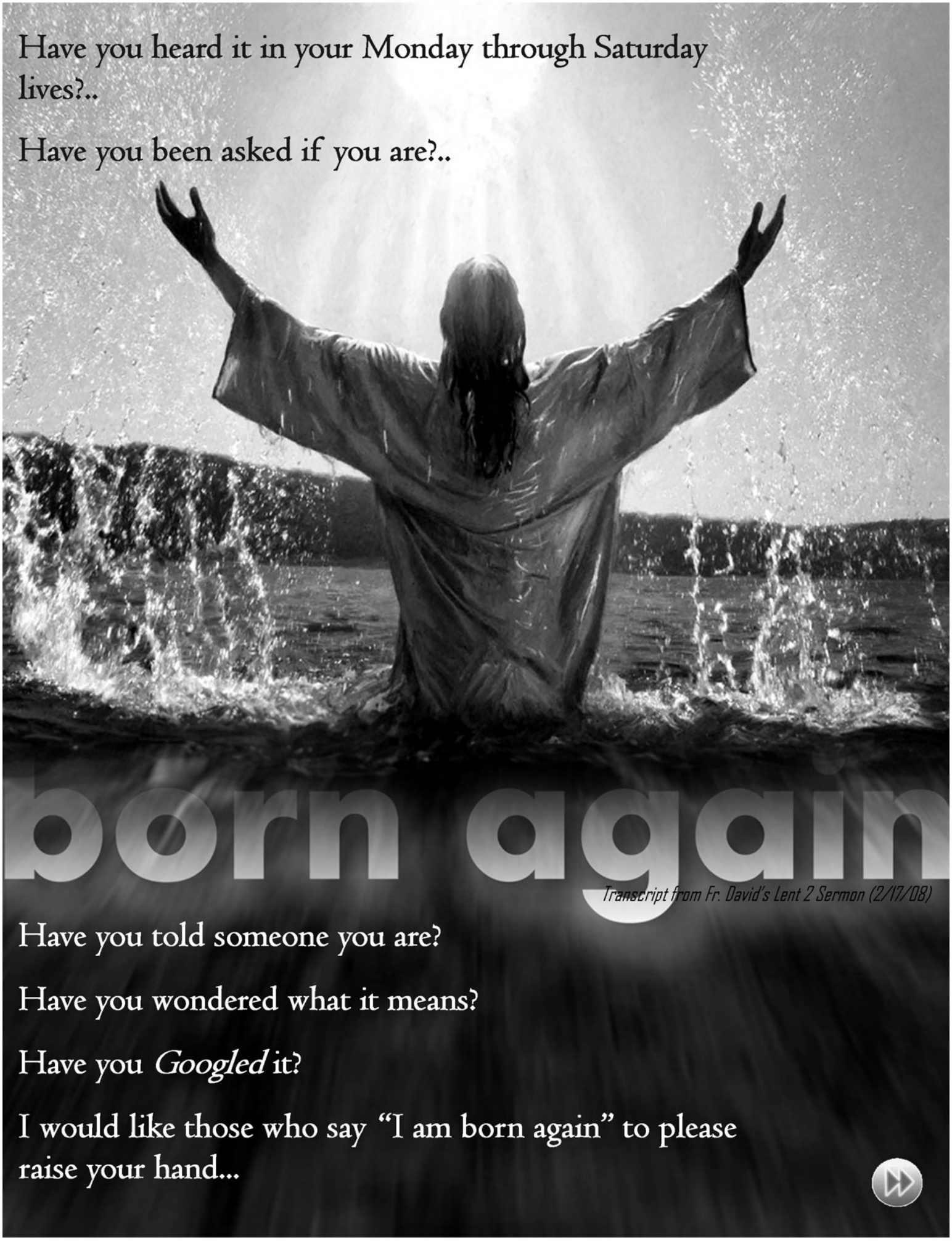
Quotable Quotes from Notable Folks

"But the good news is that the God we crucified refused to let our 'no' be the final word. God refused to hold this horrible sin against us. Raising Jesus from the grave, God rejects our rejection. God offers us the opportunity to become part of a new kingdom—of a new time—so that the world might know its true sovereign. It is a time that creates the space for us to learn to love one another, so now our loves will not become the excuse to kill in the name of those loves. For now we have learned that the very heart of love is a nonviolence, as God has come not to coerce us into loving. Rather, because God has made it possible for us to freely respond to this love, we become new creatures."

— **Stanley Hauerwas** (1998)

For more on what makes him notable, check out this web link:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Hauerwas


Have you heard it in your Monday through Saturday lives?..
Have you been asked if you are?..
born again
Transcript from Fr. David's Lent 2 Sermon (2/17/08)
Have you told someone you are?
Have you wondered what it means?
Have you *Googled* it?
I would like those who say "I am born again" to please raise your hand...

...Now, those who are baptized, please raise your hand.

Later in the sermon, we'll do this again and see if anything changes...

In the tradition of the church, for nearly 2000 years, the phrase "born again" has meant "to be baptized." To be born of water and the spirit is baptism. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, and when he came up out of the water, there was the Holy Spirit, looking for all the world like a dove. The very next verse in John after today's reading tell of Jesus and his disciples baptizing people. It's the only time, in all 4 Gospels, where we are told that Jesus baptized people.

So from the beginning, to be "born again" meant "to be baptized." So, who has been born again?

In the earliest days of the church, in the 100's and 200's A.D., to be "born again" meant "to be baptized."

In 151 A.D., Justin Martyr, a very early church father wrote:

> ***"As many as are persuaded and believe that what we [Christians] teach and say is true . . . are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For , in the name of God the Father . . . and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit [Matt. 28:19], they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' [John 3:3]"***
> ***(First Apology 61).***

In the year 252, Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, said that when those becoming Christians "receive also the baptism of the Church . . . then finally can they be fully sanctified and be the sons of God . . since it is written, 'Except a man be born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' [John 3:5]" (Letters 71 [72]:1).

So perhaps it comes as a surprise that you who raised your hands as baptized are all "born again."

There is another understanding of "born again" that is, perhaps, more commonly known today. That understanding is that one is born again through an intense, personal experience with the Lord. These experiences are often profound, may come about due to a crisis, and can be life-altering. Perhaps the best-known public figure who points to this kind of experience is President Bush, who set aside alcoholism and other things in his life in a moment of conversion.

This understanding of being "born again" also has its roots in the Bible. Think of St. Paul getting knocked to the ground in his encounter with the Lord. Sudden, overwhelming, life-changing. Yet as with much in our faith, the choice is not "either/or"—*it is "both/and"*.

I say this because many in the orthodox tradition say to the evangelicals: "It's baptism or the highway, baby — forget all this emotional stuff." The Catholic Church says that Catholics should ask Protestants, "Are you born again — the way the Bible understands that concept?" If the Evangelical has not been properly water baptized, he has not been born again "the Bible way," regardless of what he may think.

And evangelicals have been heard to say to the orthodox: "If you don't have this radical, personal encounter with God, your baptism is empty."

Amazing how we draw battle lines everywhere lines can be drawn! But this dispute is a false one. In fact, those who get into this fight make the same mistake Nicodemus made when he thought Jesus was talking about crawling back into the womb. He took the one-dimensional view. Here's what gets missed. The word in Greek is "*anothen*." It cannot be exactly put into English because "*anothen*" means two things at the same time.

It means "again," as in "born again." It also means "from above," as in "born from above." Both of these ideas live in this one

word. The sense "from above" speaks to baptism. The sense to be born "again" speaks to the more personal, emotional change. Both are included in the words of Jesus.

There is not only room for both understandings, the very word insists on both meanings.

For those with a bumper sticker view of their faith—"God said it; I believe it. Case closed."— the dilemma is in trying to learn what is it exactly that God has said. The words are most often more dense, more mysterious, more multi-layered than we care to know.

That is especially the case when Our Lord is teaching us how we might become citizens of the Kingdom of God.

What those who insist on "my way or the highway" forget to remember is that this change—this rebirth, this conversion, this turning around—it is not about our relationship with God. *It is about God's relationship with us.* That's why Jesus says: "The wind blows where it chooses." The wind being the spirit of God. God is not confined to our limited grasp of what is truly real. God is not limited in how God chooses to shape our lives.

For some, the road of conversion will be slow, life-long and not terribly emotional. For others, getting knocked to the ground is exactly what happens. For others, some of each happens. For all of us, whichever it is, we can safely say, we are in God's hands. While the nature of your journey and mine may be different, we are each of us on that journey.

Just as Abram in today's Old Testament lesson was called by God to pack up and move, so too are we.

I have said before and will likely say again, it really is important to hold what we believe lightly and not tightly. As much as we often want the "yes" and the "no," the "black" and the "white," we might remember that ours is a God who teaches in parables, not in rules, and who is a "god that is willing to live with wasted seed, with nets full of good and bad fish, with fields that grow both weeds and wheat, who says no to coercive violence, who says no to forcing people to be or do or think one thing.

Ours is a God who loves us in our messiness." [W. Willimon, *Postmodern Preaching*].

When we hear difficult, ambiguous readings like today's gospel, our task is not to grasp it, to dissect it, to break it down, so we "get it right."

Ours is an age of grasping, dissecting, breaking things down, and getting them right. The result of those efforts have been bloody wars, growing chasms between rich and poor, abandoned children and forgotten elderly.

There is another way. Let us sit with the reading and let the reading grasp us. Let it dissect us. Let the word break us down so that instead of us trying to "get it right," perhaps the Word will get us right...

Have you been born again?

Say "yes" if you have been baptized...

Say "yes" if you have encountered God on your journey and he has shaken you to your roots...

Say "yes" to the God who says "yes" to us every day of our lives...

Amen.

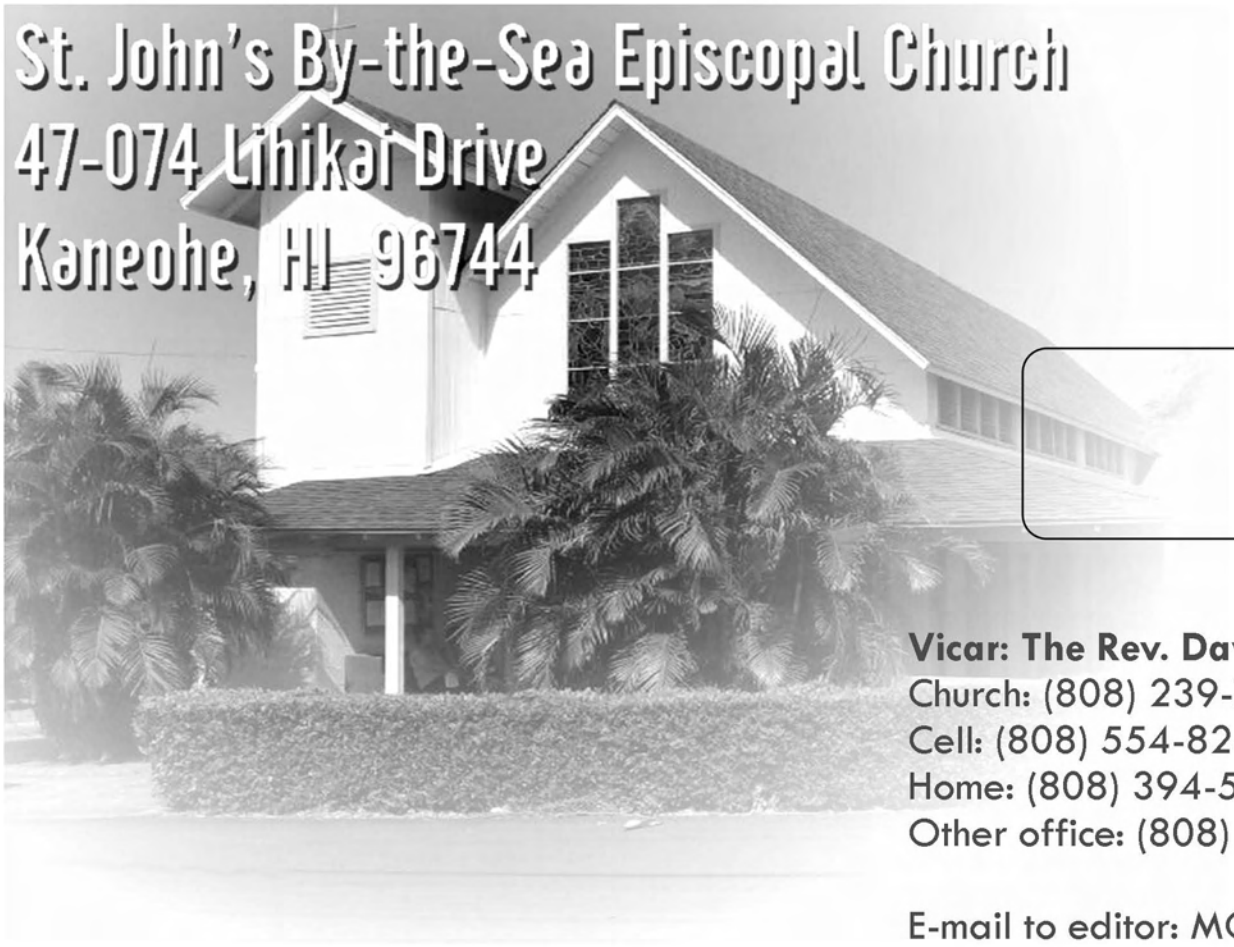
Quotable Quotes from Notable Folks

"In ordinary terms, we think of temptation as the urge to do something we would really like to do but know we shouldn't do-one more cigarette, one more fling, one more drink, one more juicy rumor. But the deepest temptation is not the urge to misbehave, to do what we know we shouldn't do, but rather the enticement to compromise our baptismal identity, to be who we are not called to be."

— Thomas Long, *Facing Up To Temptation* (1995)

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: MC_L@hotmail.com

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

sunday service (church hall) & sunday school (ho`okano hall) starting at 9.30am

wednesday eucharist/healing service starting at 9.30am

bible study follows wednesday service

afterschool children's program wednesday afternoons at 3pm