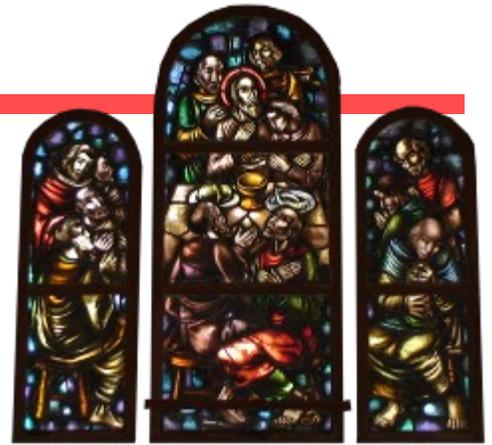




# The Journey

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

An Online Monthly Pictorial News Record



January 2021

## Let us this month

- \* Join the 8:15am Sunday Prayer Group in the Chapel
- \* Attend online class with the priest Wednesdays at 6pm
- \* Protect yourself and others by wearing a mask
- \* Tell your pastor the ministry you want to do/serve
- \* Do Daily Devotion BCP page 137
- \* Be an asset to the Parish

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# Christmas - A New Beginning

# Happy New Year



## *First Sunday after Christmas Service*

Peace



Photo by Graham White

# Reflections

by Fr. Charles A. Browning II  
Priest in charge

There's an odd thing I've seen the last several years that has become very common this year. It's this thing where people ascribe blame to the numbers of the year itself for whatever bad things happen. I first noticed it in 2016 when people started blaming "2016" for the unusual number of celebrity deaths that occurred that year. "2016 Strikes Again!" I'd see all over social media whenever a new death announcement occurred. By December, people were excited to end the year, speaking to the numbers as though they were a person: "Goodbye and good riddance, 2016!"

Of course, we've all seen this a bunch this year. *Saturday Night Live* has featured skits with this sentiment. People all over the media and in social media have spoken of "2020" as though it were a sentient being—and a bad one at that.

Just this past weekend *The Atlantic* featured an article about the tradition of personifying years. Conor Friedersdorf, staff writer for that publication, notes that personifying a year goes back to

at least the Ancient Greeks. Surely we are familiar with the old conceit of depicting the ending year as a decrepit old man and the coming year as a chubby baby (Friedersdorf notes that Normal Rockwell depicted such an image for the December 31, 1910 cover for the *Saturday Evening Post*, where old "Father Time" transforms into "Baby New Year").

So, the notion of personifying the year is not new. But, at least to me, personifying a *specific year* feels new. Ascribing blame to a series of, frankly, arbitrary numbers, feels strange and novel and, being the theological thinker that I am, makes me wonder how it reflects the state of spirituality in our current time.



This coincides with another odd phenomenon we might notice: ascribing a will to "the universe." I first noticed this in a McDonald's commercial in the early 2000s, where a man's internal monologue says that "it's like the universe is telling him" to talk to some woman he sees. Since then, it's popped up all over popular culture (and now that I've pointed it out, you'll probably start to notice it too, if you haven't already).

Here's the thing: numbers and "the universe" are impassive. They have no will, no mind. The universe just *is* and 2020 is a series of numbers we use to denote the passage of time from a miscalculation of when Jesus was resurrected (we're probably off by about six years or so).

The question is: why do we do this? Why do we personify years or the physical space in which we exist?

I think it's because, despite Western culture's protests to the contrary, we humans inherently realize that there's more to the world than what we can see. We *need* there to be more than external, physical phenomena. We are incapable of being comfortable with a universe that is impassive, random, and unconcerned with us. In short, we cannot conceive of our existence without also accounting for the spiritual or supernatural.

We've spent the last few weeks in our Christian Formation classes discussing the concept of the "apocalypse." In thinking behind the apocalypse is meant to reveal the spiritual action taking place behind or above our perception of existence. Saint John of Patmos, in the Book of Revelation, is telling us that Rome is like Babylon before it and that all oppressive empires are pawns in a spiritual struggle. The real fight is not with people, he says, but with the deeper powers at work in creation. And those fights are, ultimately, above our pay-grade and can only be handled by the Rider on a White Horse—our savior Jesus, returning in His full messianic glory.

We live in an apocalyptic time, a time where things are being revealed. And we human can't help but speak of what's happening in mythic terms, personifying and spiritualizing otherwise impersonal and earthly things. It's what we've always done. But, as Christians, we know what's happening behind the scenes. We know that the real struggle is not with the physical world. Saint Paul reminds us in his letter to the church at Ephesus, our struggle "is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." Paul might

just as easily say that our struggle, the *real* one, isn't against viruses or partisan politics—rather, our struggle is against the spiritual things empowered by them, things like depression and loneliness, anger, rage, violence, division.

Yes, 2020 has been a tough year. But 2020 isn't the enemy. It's just a series of numbers. May the Lord, through His Holy Spirit, empower us throughout this next year to resist the real enemy. May we be filled with God's *aloha* so that we see the *mana*, the spiritual power, that is *pono*, right and true, at work in our midst.

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## Mele Kalikimaka

*From the Browning Family*



**First Christmas in Hawaii**



**Hugh Kaiser, Missionary**

# St. Mary's Prayer Group

By Hugh Kaiser

The St. Mary's Prayer group began as a Bible study started by Bill Sumida who was known as 'the parking lot evangelist' at Saint Mary's, in the early 1980s. Sometime around the mid-80s the Bible study began to be a prayer group that prayed for people during communion.



**Left to right: Ruth Yoshioka, Hugh Kaiser and Gail Hirozawa**

In the mid '80s it seemed like the whole church was a prayer group and we had all night prayer meetings in the Angels at Play facility next door. The 'group' that now prays for the prayer needs of the church every Sunday morning before the service, was begun by Ruth Yoshioka and Thelma Pang sometime in the late '80s. Not many have joined this group since then, and there has been great attrition due to deaths and moving away.

Since the early 90s, the prayer group has been faithful with or without a priest in charge for Saint Mary's. We have had many times without priests, and the prayer team

has been faithful through all these things including bad weather, not so good health and so forth. Ruth has been keeping it going for some years now. Others have come and gone.

Now in this pandemic, Ruth is almost alone and has been faithful every Sunday to come, often with her husband Sam who sometimes is not able to come because of his health. I have joined them whenever I am in town and not ministering at another church, which means that since August this year when the pandemic brought me to Hawaii, and since we have been having actual church service gatherings on site, I have been joining them and quite often Ruth and Sam and I are alone.

It would be really nice to have some new blood join us as we pray for the needs of Saint Mary's and our priest in charge father Charles who comes in to receive prayers before he does the service. We meet in Soldiers' Chapel and start at 0815 Sunday mornings. Know that prayer changes things!

**God Bless you richly,  
Hugh**



**It was a wonderful**



**Christmas Eve Service**

December 24

2020



# Sanctuary Foyer Brightens Up



Following roof repairs by United Roofing, Impact Painting painted the entryway of the sanctuary. Be sure to admire the new paint job during this new year. Painter Kayton did an excellent job.



**December 2020**



Kayton of Impact Painting says Merry Christmas to St. Mary's

[smomjourney@yahoo.com](mailto:smomjourney@yahoo.com)

## The Journey Team

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**WEB MASTER**  
Richert Au Hoy



**WRITER/PHOTOGRAPHER**  
James Maruyama



# Visitor Highlight



EvYonne Browning visiting from Florida



Lydia Hathaway and Nick Schlutt visiting from South Bend, Indiana

## Christmas Day Service



Fr. Charles Browning II  
Preaching about God's love for You

Cainna Browning sings: "Away in a Manger"



Pablo Cortez III chants Psalm 98

Rev. Martha Blanchett read Isaiah 52:7-10



Angniq alusistuaq  
(Yupik)

Feliz Navidad  
(Spanish)

Merry Christmas

Kurisumasu Omedeto  
(Japanese)

Maligayang  
Pasko

Sung Tan Chuk Ha  
(Korean)

Mele Kalikimaka  
(Hawaiian)

Feliz Natal  
(Potuguese)

(Tagalog)

Kung His Hsin Nien bing Chu Shen Tan  
(Chinese, Mandarin)

Neekiriisimas annim oo iyer seefe feyiyeech  
(Micronesia)

# Road Map



An Online Monthly Pictorial News Record

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## Vestry Meeting

10:15am

January 17

## Annual Parish Meeting

January 31, 2021 after service



## Sunday Worship Service 9:00am

In-Person and Live Streamed  
on YouTube & FaceBook

### Office Closed

January 1st & 18th

### AA Group

Tuesdays 7pm



## January Birthdays

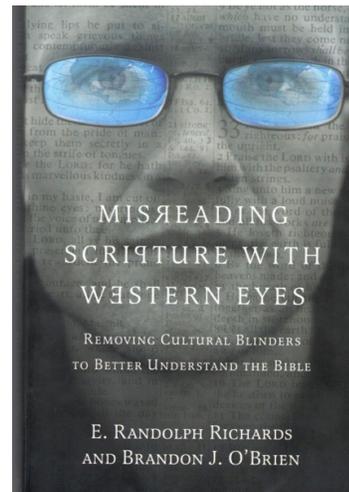
- 3-William Mok
- 9-Clifford Browning
- 18-Murray Cohen
- 26-Isaiah Horimoto

## Christian Formation Classes

Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes

Wednesdays at 6pm

Live Stream on YouTube



## Prayer Ministry

8:15am  
Sundays in  
Soldier Chapel