

FROM PASTOR TOM

Hearts Unfold Like Flowers Before You

“Joyful, joyful we adore you, God of glory,
Lord of love...”

It is amazing to me how the bud of a rose slowly opens and comes into blossom. Or the hibiscus, first bud; then a rolled up young flower; the next day exploding into a vibrant yellow, pink, orange, red, or variegated blossom – trumpeting its beauty for a single day; and then curling up and dropping to the ground.

Yes, in the exploding beauty of our changing world God loves us equally and even more so than the fragrance and serendipitous beauty of a flower carving for itself a fragile place to add glory to the ordinary scenery of our lives. Which of course is never ordinary at all! Everything in its place has a beauty all its own and yet is shared with all who come across it.

I particularly am not very fond of earwigs. Brilliant back bugs with pinchers at one end. Yet I was carefully corrected by a gardener who reminded me that if I liked the beauty of the flowers along the pathway then I had better pause and thank the earwig – as well as other crawly creatures – which run around as catalyst pollinators of the possibilities gently wrapped in the beautiful flowers we admire.

Of course there was that huge green and black striped lily...looking something like a giant “*Jack in the Pulpit*” that grows wild in the New England forests. This lily was six times larger and had a horrid stench. Another gardener told me it was “*Devil’s Breath*.” The odor I abhorred was an invitation to tiny roaming creatures to find some taste of decayed food only to be consumed by the lily’s hidden well. A God given natural insect remover for any garden!

Could I have it both ways? Beauty without bugs? Or, an aromatic stench cleaning up the wandering bugs! Never-the-less in the garden, the natural beautiful and the ugly both yield some help for the fruit and seeds for seasons yet unseen.

I think our hearts open up with the fragility of a budding flower. Some impressions of the heart last for a fleeting moment. Others seem to last beyond a life time. Each is unfolding by a plan unseen in the soil where we take root and growing up-ward carve a space within the nourishing sun, absorbing the dampness of rain like drops of tears falling to refresh the earth below.

I am told the seeds of the sunflower have a strict and repeating pattern, but must be studied to be seen. I simply like the way beans grow toward the light every time I turn them away. I see they have a natural inclination to grow toward the energy they need.

“...*Hearts unfold, like flowers before thee...opening to the sun (son) above...*”

We unfold according to the love we seek,...and the love we are given,... and the love we pour out into the world. So who can say for sure we have really ever left the garden? Even transplanted, we too reach for the nourishment within the environment where we find ourselves. We too want to have a solid root base, strong and grounded. We too can bring beauty to the world around us for a day, and for an eternity.

What great beauty God has poured into our unfolding hearts. Opening us to bring unfolding love and compassion! Each of us will attract amazement in the glory of God’s grace – like a flower adding unexpected beauty along the ordinary pathway of our lives. Blossom where you are both fragile and beautiful!

Hearts unfolding – Happy Valentines’ Day Blessings,
Pastor Tom

SENIOR MINISTRY

The Senior Ministry will be meeting on Thursday, Feb 23 at 10 am. Come enjoy fellowship and a nourishing lunch. Program to be announced. Last month Pastor Jim made a presentation to the group.

VOLUNTEERS FOR FEBRUARY 19, 26

USHERS: Barbara Iwami, Millie Daikawa

FLOWERS:

2/19: Else Ushijima (Mem)

2/26: Hats Kamimura

CHILDCARE:

2/19: Millie Uchida

2/26: Eileen Shiraishi

LAYREADERS:

2/19: Margaret Torigoe

2/26: Carolyn Lum-Bellem

REFRESHMENT:

2/26:

congregation at time of passing them out just before worship. Mahalo to all.

PASTOR LINDA PETRUCCELLI INSTALLATION

Hawai'i Island Association will install Linda Petrucelli as the Pastor of Hilo Coast United Church of Christ (28-1630 Old Mamalahoa Highway, in Honomu) on Sunday, February 26, 2 p.m.. Our congratulations to Pastor Linda.

CHC MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

A membership meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 19 following worship to receive the CHC 2011 Annual Report. Read the report and bring your concerns to the meeting.

NOTE: Due to new postal regulations, the report was not accepted until Friday, so hopefully you will receive it in time for the meeting. However, extra copies are available in the back of the sanctuary.

PERSONALS:

Congratulations to **Karl Kawahara** and **Al Manliguis** for the honoring recognition they have received from the Hilo High School Foundation for their years of dedicated service and encouragement with the students and faculty of Hilo High. It is always a wonderful pleasure to be with Karl as he introduces you to one of friends and says with a broad smile on his face, "He or she was a former student of mine!" And you know in your heart Karl is also saying "My! you have done wonderfully well. I am proud to have had a part in your life." Yes, Karl is a good neighbor in Hilo and has been an excellent teaching example for his students. Thank you Karl for the warmth of all your dedicated efforts.

They will be honored on Wednesday, Feb 15 at the Sangha Hall.

MAHALO

Valentine Appreciation: Special thank You to Gail, Saeko, Joyce, Margaret, & Connie, on behalf of the Sunday School teachers and students who enjoyed making the Sunday School Valentine Card which was a great success on Sunday, February 12th. The Sunday School students enjoyed it very, very much. For sure that the Korean Students, especially the girls enjoyed it very much and they had a wonderful time distributing the cards to the

**The 9 Timeless Secrets of Being Happy
by Brian Vaszily
Founder of IntenseExperiences.com**

1) Embrace New Experiences.

Most people suffer from merely existing versus really living. Don't get caught in a rut; get out of it if you are. Explore. Play. Go beyond your comfort zone. Don't lean on the excuse "I don't have time to try new things." It is as tragic and ridiculous as saying "I don't have time to breathe." New experiences are life. Live deeply.

2) Be Who You Are.

Recognize and clear through what others expect of you, including society's expectations, your parents' expectations, the opposite genders' expectations, and anyone's expectations. Recognize and clear through the guilt, anger, fear and other emotions that are sabotaging you. What are your dreams? Your goals? Your loves? Who are you? Be that person.

3) Let Go of the Past.

The past is good for two things: the happy memories, and the lessons it provides. Clinging to resentment and sadness for past events hurts one person the most: you. Don't let the past suck the gift of the present out of you. Forgive. Let go. Be here now, and go forward.

4) Be Kind.

It is easy to act kindly to those who have been kind to you. Do so, but also remember that is not where kindness is needed most. Recall those many times where you made mistakes, where you reacted out of negative emotions instead of responding from who you really are. Recall how you felt, or how you would have felt, if others responded to your mistakes with kindness instead of harsh criticism or a cold shoulder. Negativity only breeds more negativity. Empathize, and choose to be kind. It spreads rapidly.

5) Be Responsible for Yourself.

Whatever happens, however promising or tragic, only one person is responsible for how you respond to it: you. There are no greater wastes of energy and potential than blame, envy, a desire for revenge, and wallowing in self-pity. You and only you are responsible for how you respond to anything and how you act. You wish others were a certain way? You wish the world were a certain way? Be the example.

6) Nurture Relationships.

Think of your most joyful moments. Think of all you have learned. Think of what has helped you grow. Chances are great these all involve other people, and other relations such as pets and nature too. There are over six billion people on this earth. There are infinite relationships to be had. Everyone has something to understand and to learn from. There is infinite love to be had, and to give. You can choose to be lonely, but you are never alone.

7) Recognize All You Have, and Be Grateful for It.

If you are alive, you are fortunate. If you can read this, you are fortunate. If you can walk, talk, see, smell, taste, or feel, or all of these, you are fortunate. You are what you focus on, so if you focus on what you lack, you become that lack. Focus on all that you do have, on the gifts inside and all around you. Be grateful to be great.

8) Do What Inspires You.

Painting, singing, writing, biking, swimming, gardening, reading, dancing, walking, woodcarving ... what is your flame? What ignites you, inspires you, enlightens you, restores your life? Do it, and do it often. Do not believe your excuse of having too much work to do and too little time for what inspires you. Doing what inspires you is the very fuel that will give you the strength and motivation to do the other things you need to do, and do them well.

9) Remember that Happiness is a State, Not a Circumstance

Happiness is a state of being, not merely a moment of pleasure or joy. By committing to your happiness you acknowledge and accept that there will be times of challenge and

suffering, but by staying true to who you are you will not just endure but thrive. Happiness is not just the bird floating serenely on the water, and happiness is not made unhappy by the rock that falls and temporarily disturbs the water. Happiness is the water itself, always being exactly what it is.

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