



Fill the Heart

Mahalo to the authors and artists who have contributed to "Fill the Heart." This volume contains works by:

Sadie Yamaki
G. Robert Smith
Khloe Santo
Percyna Pitiol
Mace Peng
Esther Kodani
Jane Kawazoe
Anne Sadayasu
Lorraine Davis
Kashten Santo
Eric Anderson

Series Editor: Eric Anderson
Layout and Support: Momi Lyman

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A Daily Devotional for Lent

Church of the Holy Cross
United Church of Christ
440 West Lanikaula Street
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720
808-935-1283
www.holycrosshilo.com



Fill the Heart

We often think of Lent as a time to empty ourselves. Indeed, this is a time to shed unnecessary burdens like destructive habits, selfish decisions, and distracted thinking. Emptiness is not a goal in itself. The space made available by discarding those sins and distractions begs to be filled, and filled this time with love, wonder, and joy. Easter begs us to reach it with a heart that is full.

How can you fill your heart? In many ways, I hope and pray. I hope and pray that this devotional provides you with another one. Certainly the levels of my heart have been rising as I read and viewed the reflections and artwork. I will never hear the phrase, "I got more red paint!" in the same way again. It will always make me smile.

Members and friends of Church of the Holy Cross United Church of Christ in Hilo, Hawai'i have contributed these reflections. Some are prose, some are poetry, some are photographs, and some are drawings. Some are repeated from 2022's "Renew the Heart." You will find the fresh imagination of keiki and the seasoned experience of kupuna. You will find thinking honed by education and you will find the dance of new encounters with the Holy Spirit.

You will find a wide range of people bringing their wisdom, spirit, and knowledge to fill the heart.

May their gifts fill your heart, mind, and spirit.

Eric Anderson, Pastor
February, 2024

has laid down its dominion, know
its power cannot hold you in the grave.

O Christ, we wait.

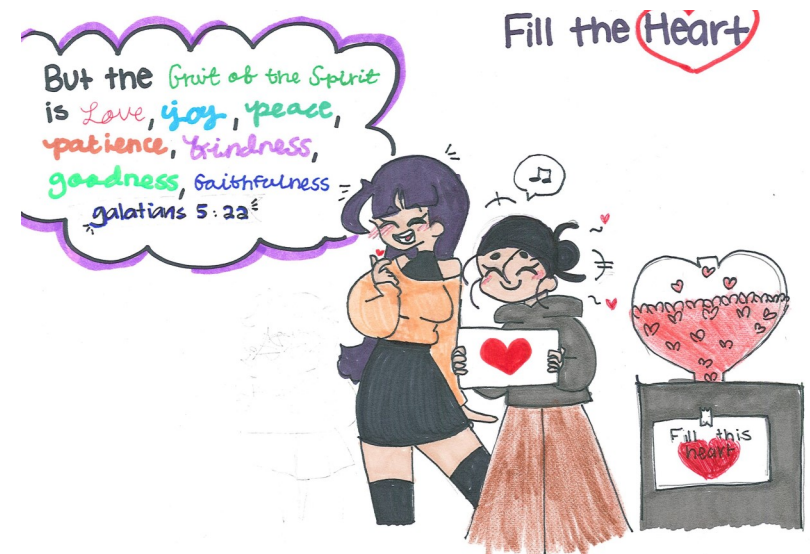
We wait as for a sudden dawn.

We wait as for a chick from egg.

We wait for your world-changing life.

Eric Anderson

Easter Sunday, March 31



Percyna Pitiot

May your Easter Day be filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness!

Which do we choose?
Love's blessing, though disguised
as tears, or saw-toothed edges,
promising protection
they cannot deliver?
Which will fill the heart?
Eric Anderson

Good Friday, March 29

A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. – John 19:29
A jar of sour wine is not the flavor I would choose to quench my thirst. But then, I would not choose a cross to end the cycle of my life. A trickle only, not enough to satisfy a thirst, but just enough to speak with love that “It is finished” – and so you fill our hearts.

Eric Anderson

Holy Saturday, March 30

O Christ, we wait.
Not like your first disciples did.
We do not wait for our arrest,
to join you in your crucifixion. No.
O Christ, we wait.
We wait because we know that death

Thursday, March 14

Sadie



Beloved let us
love one another for love is from god
1 John 4:7

Sadie Yamaki

Friday, March 15

Love

John 3:16 – For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Love is patient; is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. I bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:8 – Love never ends.

1 Corinthians 13:13 – And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Psalms 100:5 – For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever.

Jane Kawazoe

Saturday, March 16

Fill the Heart

I have been thinking about this Lenten Devotional theme for a while, wondering what I could contribute to this project. What fills the heart, how might I fill one's heart...?

An everyday occurrence came to mind. I was driving home on Kapiolani Street where the new Veterans' Home is being built and a huge truck, with a long trailer carrying supplies, was backing into a narrow area to deliver materials for the buildings. The driver had to skillfully maneuver his cab several times in order to get the trailer in the right angle to get his delivery to the desired destination. Traffic was stopped while he did this, but he persevered and was successful in good time.

I marveled at how well he was able to do his job!

As I waited for the traffic light to allow me to go, the driver got out of his cab where I could see him. I called out of my window, "Job well done!" and gave him a thumbs up. He smiled and yelled back, "Thanks!" I feel both of our hearts were filled. I recognized his good work, and he was happy to know that his work was appreciated.

We need to remember that it does not take much to recognize people, to let them know that they are appreciated for what they have to offer. Too often we take things for granted. Just a word or two can make a big difference in helping to fill one's heart. In so doing, you fill your heart, too! That is what a loving God asks of us!

Anne Sadayasu

Wednesday, March 27



Khloe Santo

Maundy Thursday, March 28

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

– John 13:34



locked room, the Emmaus road encounter, and the giving of the Holy Spirit are also still to come.

Jesus' promise to them *will* be fulfilled. Their hearts *will* rejoice, and that joy and hope will be at the heart of the message we continue to proclaim and celebrate twenty centuries later.

Prayer:

Loving God, in the midst of pain may we yet open our hearts to the hope that joy will return even as it did for Jesus' followers so long ago.

G. Robert Smith

Tuesday, March 26

Prayer

A blessed connection to our Savior.

Enfold one another in love.

Pray for each other, for the needy, for good health, reconciliation, restoration, recovery throughout illness.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 – Pray without ceasing, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

James 5:16 – Pray for one another so that you may be healed.

Psalms 86:6 – Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication.

Jane Kawazoe

Sunday, March 17

I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you. – Psalm 119:11

What is your relationship with the word of God?

I know, that's a difficult question, since the phrase "the word of God" has so many meanings. For the ancient Psalmist, it meant God's Law, God's direction. The prophets spoke what they believed to be the word of God. In Jesus, Christians embrace a word of God that has taken on human life. We have also come full circle to use "the word of God" to mean the Bible.

The ancient Psalmist treasured the word in their heart. Jeremiah found the words of God so sweet that he wrote, "I ate them." John's Gospel praises God's word as life and light. The New Testament writers believed that the word of God was a treasure to be shared.

What is your relationship with the word of God?

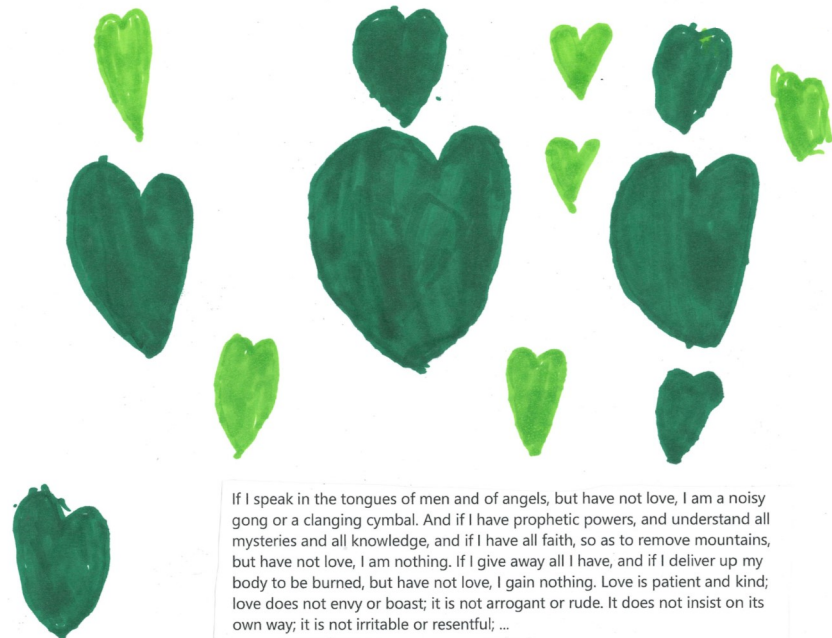
May it be for you as for the Psalmist, who wrote, "I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word."

Prayer

Fill us, heart and soul, with your word, O God. May we rejoice in our knowledge and love of you. Amen.

Eric Anderson

Monday, March 18



Kashten Santo

Tuesday, March 19

*For I will pour water on the thirsty land
and streams on the dry ground;*

*I will pour my spirit upon your descendants
and my blessing on your offspring. – Isaiah 44:3*

I do not tend plants well. Flower pots in my care either overflow with water or crack for lack of moisture. I don't have a sign on the door reading, "Plants, abandon all hope who enter here," but I probably should.

On the other hand, I am surrounded by lush greenery. Ti plants, palms of different varieties, orchids, and of course the soaring hibiscus greet me every day. To this day the

"Hosannah!" or the stones,
though muffled, would cry out,
while high above the streets
the palm leaves wave
their praise.

Eric Anderson

Monday, March 25

*So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts
will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. - John 16:22*

It's a pretty safe bet that all of us have known pain not once, but many times in our lives. It's also a safe bet that we've experienced many types and levels of pain: physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual.

In this passage from the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks to his disciples at the Last Supper before they depart for Gethsemane. He has been telling them about what is soon to happen to him. In a little while, he says, they will no longer see him. They will weep and mourn — while the world, on the other hand, will rejoice. They will suffer pain. And yet, he promises, in just a little while longer they will see him again. The pain in their hearts will turn to unquenchable joy.

Not surprisingly, they're not getting it. We can't really blame them, since at that point they don't know what the next few days will hold. The pain of Judas' betrayal, Peter's denial, Jesus' agonizing death, and hiding behind locked doors in fear of the authorities is still to come.

But Mary's joyful reunion with the risen Jesus by the empty tomb, his unexpected appearance to his disciples in the

I am so happy that God had a divine plan when he knitted me and knew the outcome. I am glad that He designed me with love. With God, no frogging required.

Just imagine, He did that with everyone!

My heart is full!

Lorraine Davis

Palm Sunday, March 24

The hooves would raise the dust
upon their steady walk
if not for weathered fabric



laid down on the stones,
if not for leafy branches
stripped from trees when coats
and cloaks grow scarce.
Let not the dust inhibit
cries of "Save us!" and

sheer exuberance of growing things in Hilo takes my breath away.

And I have nothing to do with it.

God has poured water on the thirsty land and streams on the dry ground, so much that we rarely experience *dry* ground in Hilo. The rain fills the soil, and the roots of the plants drink deeply, and the stems rise gracefully toward the sky.

As they do, they fill my heart.

Prayer

Fill my heart with the goodness of the Earth, O God, with all the blessings of the rain that nourishes the ground.
Amen.

Eric Anderson

Wednesday, March 20

Peace

Colossians 3:15 – And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. You were called to peace.

John 14:27 – Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.

Jane Kawazoe

Thursday, March 21

When he retired from Delite Bakery, my dad visited me, solo. Mom always accompanied him. I can't recall dad traveling alone ever.

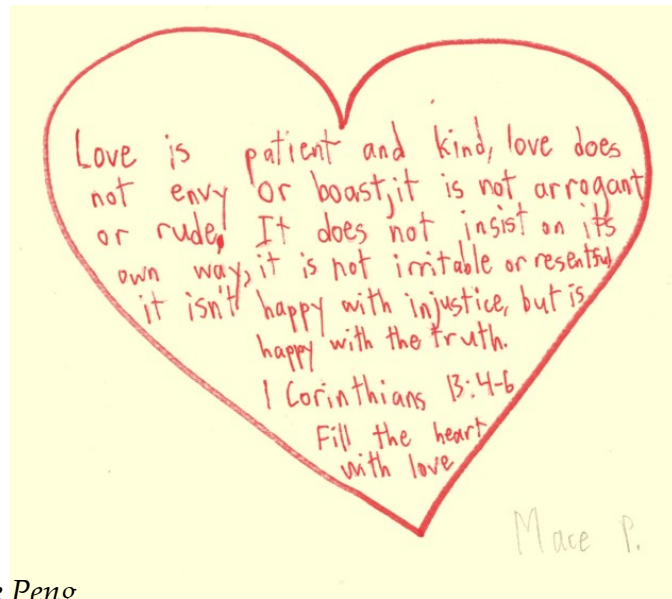
We spent three days together, just dad and I. It was a wonderful visit.

He departed for Honolulu on the first flight on Aloha Airlines. From the waiting room, he took the escalator to the second floor. He turned to look at me, waved goodbye and smiled. I waved back with tears in my eyes.

What a glorious morning. Etched in my heart, dad and I.

Esther Kodani

Friday, March 22



Mace Peng

Saturday, March 23

For you created my inmost being;

you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;

your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

– Psalm 139:13-14

I knit. Well, sort of. My repertoire consists of dishcloths and simple winter scarves. Knitting patterns are still like a foreign language to me, and if you want to talk gauge, the difference between acrylic and alpaca yarn, or the difference between fingering and worsted, I cannot speak to those. I pick out my yarn by whatever catches my eye. I start projects with this certainty – if it is cotton, it is going to be a dishcloth and if it is something else, it is going to be a scarf. I rarely can envision what the end product will look like and after multiple ripping out and starting over (it's called frogging) I will often find my end product a pleasant surprise.

If I predetermine who my masterpiece is for, I spend time in thoughts about that person, asking for blessings, sending them love and praying for them while I am working on the project. The items are made with love.

Psalm 139:13-14 is one of my favorite passages. I imagine God taking the strands of DNA (yarn) from my parents and ancestors and making me into the person that was born into this world. He took Oliver's temperament, Betty's thick hair and square face, Phil's early graying, great, great grandma Christina's eye color, and a myriad of other yarn strands (DNA) and knitted me using a very intricate pattern and knowing the outcome. I was fearfully and wonderfully made. I was made with love.