



The Episcopal Church in Almaden

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THE MIDWEEK *E*-BULLETIN 8 SEPTEMBER 2010

UPCOMING WORSHIP

September 9	Thursday 7:30am	Holy Eucharist: Feast of Sister Constance
September 12	16 Pentecost: 7:30am 10:30am	Holy Eucharist Holy Eucharist with Contemporary Music

SAINTS' TRIVIA Who was Sister Constance, and what was she doing in Memphis...? Don't know? Come to our Thursday morning Eucharist and get the answers! No fair googling...

BIBLE STUDY

BIBLE STUDY ON SUMMER BREAK Bible Study resumes under the leadership of Mary McPherson on Thursday, September 16, at 10:30am at church. Topic: the Gospel of Luke. For further information, contact Mary McPherson.

WORK DAY

This coming Saturday, September 11, beginning at 9:00am. Plenty of work for everyone! Indoors and out... Wear casual or work clothes. If you have any questions, please contact Junior Warden Alex Dykes.

TIME CHANGE COMING

No, not Daylight Saving Time... But the time of our later service. It changes to 11:00am this coming Sunday, September 12. Don't forget!

BRING-A-GUEST OPPORTUNITIES: SEE DETAILS BELOW

- **September 12: Second Service reverts to 11:00; Sunday School Start-Up; "Folk" Service; and Barbecue.**
- **September 19: Choir Returns.**
- **September 24: Fellowship Evening.**
- **September 26: Guest Preacher.**

SUNDAY ATTENDANCE

- Fourth Quarter 2009 Average: 89
- First Quarter 2010 Average: 87
- Second Quarter 2010 Average: 78
- 29 August 2010 Total: 67
- 5 September 2010 Total: 59

NO SUMMER BREAK While it is true that that the Lord rested on the Sabbath, God still expects us to come to worship on Sunday -- week in and week out. That's right: no summer break from Sunday worship! So... If you are in town, come and spend a couple hours with us on Sunday morning. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness; learn about the faith; and share fellowship with other parishioners and their friends.

SERMON: 5 SEPTEMBER 2010

Imagine coming to church some Sunday morning and reading an entire book of the bible.

Well. You just did. Or, to be more exact, you just heard read an entire book of the bible minus the last three verses. So here are the missing verses of the Letter to Philemon which constitutes our second reading today – and with barely 335 words in the original Greek -- one of the shortest books in all scripture.

“One thing more -- prepare a guest room for me, for I am hoping through your prayers to be restored to you.

Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow-workers.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.”

And, that is it: All twenty-five verses of Paul's Letter to Philemon. The Letter is so short in fact, that it is not even broken down into chapters.

Philemon, for its brevity, is nevertheless a fascinating text. It is considered one of the genuine works of Paul, and it is the only one of his letters which is addressed, not to an entire church or Christian community, but to an individual. We do not know all the details behind the letter – who all the characters were, where the letter was written, exactly when – but it is clearly an appeal on Paul's part for one of his companions named Onesimus, a run-away slave who has embraced the Christian faith.

Curiously, his master or owner, Philemon, is also a Christian, presumably a wealthy merchant of Colossae, and a friend or follower of Paul. Paul is here apparently sending Onesimus back to Philemon along with this Letter, asking that Onesimus be treated well upon his return and not be punished for his escape. Paul butters up Philemon with kind words – what Luther called holy flattery -- and subtly suggests that Philemon should allow Onesimus to continue his work with Paul.

Over all, the Letter offers intriguing insight into the life of the early Church – the acceptance of slavery, for instance, and the fact that rich and poor alike made up the body of the Church. Curious as well is the name of Onesimus, the run-away slave, which simply means “useful” in the original Greek. It pretty much tells us how slave owners viewed their “property” in those days. Paul plays with the name or word for “useful,” suggesting that Onesimus will be more useful now continuing to spread the good news of the Gospel as his companion. Paul comes across as a kindly elder statesman of the early Church, confident of himself and certain of his influence and friendship.

Slavery, for the most part, is of course today a thing of the past. The idea that one person could actually own the person and labor of another is abhorrent to us -- perhaps particularly on a Labor Day weekend, perhaps whenever we pause to remember that much of our nation's early economy was based on slavery. Today, each of us is called to contribute to the whole -- no matter the color of our skin. Each of us has an important role to play in the commonweal of our society and community. Without having to even think about it, we remember that we are a society of free people and individuals, not slaves, but that it is only when we work together that we become a community and a nation -- and a church.

This Labor Day is also perhaps a good time to remember that we too, like ancient Onesimus, must be useful. It is never enough to simply take and use. Each of us has been endowed with talents and abilities which are uniquely our own, but which must be shared if they are to have any value. One of the great tasks of life is to discover within ourselves these talents and to give them expression. Useful, then, is for us no longer a pejorative name as it was for Onesimus. For us, it becomes a means of self-expression and a contribution to "the whole state of Christ' Church." Becoming useful binds us each to the other, and makes us one.

There is no evidence or documentation recording what happened as a result of Paul's Letter to Philemon. We can only assume that Onesimus was made free and continued his important ministry with Paul. Some commentators suggest that Onesimus went on to become one of the early bishops of the Church, but there is really no evidence for this one way or the other.

It may not be recorded or remembered a hundred year from now -- much less two thousand -- what contributions we made to the life of the community and the Church. But be assured that what we do today will live on. Like Onesimus, we too must become useful in all that we do. As Voltaire, the French *philosophe* is reputed to once have written: "How infinitesimal is the importance of anything I can do; but how infinitely important it is that I should do it."

Amen

UPCOMING EVENTS

CHOIR PRACTICE Begins this Thursday evening, September 9. Check with Music Director, Asa Stern, for details.

WORK DAY This coming Saturday, September 11, beginning at 9:00am. Plenty of work for everyone! Indoors and out... Wear casual or work clothes. If you have any questions, please contact Junior Warden Alex Dykes.

SCHEDULE CHANGE Our second service reverts to 11:00am on Sunday, September 12. Mark your calendars now...before you forget...and get to church on time!

SUNDAY SCHOOL Also commences on Sunday, September 12. See the September SHAPE for program details. And, check out our nifty advertisement in the latest *Almaden Times!*

MYSTIFY THE MINISTER Father Frank will be available this coming Sunday, September 12, after the 7:30am service for discussion of all things church. Grab a cuppa joe and head for the music room. Bring your questions or discussion points -- or be challenged by Father Frank's hidden agenda. Because of the scheduled barbecue, there will be NO forum after the 11:00am service. Pray, Eat, Relax.

ACOLYTE TRAINING On Sunday afternoon, September 12, after the 11:00 am service. All are welcome. We love seeing our young acolytes at the altar, but actually anyone of any age can join in. If you have questions about this ministry, contact Father Frank...or just show up at the training session!

GET INTO SHAPE The deadline for the October SHAPE is a week from today, September 15. Make submissions to newsdesk@eca-sj.org.

CHOIR Our wonderful ECA Choir returns on Sunday, September 19, at the 11:00am service. Check the September SHAPE or watch this space for details.

YOUTH NEWS On Sunday, September 19, there will be an important meeting for parents of youth in 6th through 12th grades. We will meet after the 9:00 UCC service and the 11:00 ECA service. Come to whichever meeting is most convenient for you. Save the dates: September 19 6:00-8:00pm JHYGs and SHYGs activity at church; September 25 Time TBA JHYGs and SHYGs beach day.

THE MILLENNIUM KIDS: THE SERIES A six-week course in twenty-first century parenting. Pick up a flyer at church. Tell your family, friends, and neighbors. Next session: Sunday, September 19, 3:00pm – 5:00pm. Contact Beth Proudfoot MFT for further information.

EVENING OF MUSIC AND FELLOWSHIP With Guest artist, John Leslie. You will not want to miss this one! Friday, September 24, at 6:00pm. Potluck followed by program. See the September SHAPE for details.

GUEST PREACHER AND LECTURER Melanie Weiner, our children's ministry director and UCC seminarian, will be our guest preacher at both services on Sunday, September 26. Melanie will also be leading our Sunday forums after each service this day, discussing contemporary issues in Israel based on her recent journey there.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN? Tell us your fondest recollection, your favorite activity, your not-to-miss event, your most cherished prayer or worship service, your top-ten list. We are putting together our thoughts for fall stewardship. What makes this place so special...? Forward your reflections to Father Frank at frfrank@eca-sj.org.

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BARREL Bring non-perishable food items to church for this worthy cause. The barrel is located in the narthex and will remain for another few weeks.

NEWS FROM RAJ KUMAR Our fellow parishioner and vestry member, Raj Kumar, sends greetings from his native India. Meanwhile, Megala is visiting with her mother in the Philippines. No word yet on when they will return.

SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE We are finished with visitations of our final candidates and now find ourselves in the holy stage of processing the information from each visitation team. We are compiling our thoughts, observations, and feelings for the Vestry's decision-making. It will soon be time for our committee to withdraw from the process and let our Vestry do their work. Our schedule is in place for the Vestry to have all candidate information and begin their prayerful work in the middle of September. We continue to be blessed and are grateful for all your prayers for the candidates, the Search Committee and the Vestry.

ALTAR FLOWERS Dedicating the Sunday altar flowers is a great way to honor your loved ones or to celebrate a significant personal or family event. Note that supplying flowers for the second half of each calendar year is our responsibility at ECA. Please sign up for altar flowers for the coming months on the fellowship hall bulletin board. Plus, as your date approaches, you will get a call and an email to help you remember.

ECA E-SCRIP NEWS With E-Scrip, a portion of the dollars you spend in the community is given back to our church. It is like free money! And, it is easy to sign up. If you would like help getting on board,

please contact Mary McPherson at 268-9559 marymcp@aol.com.

SUDANESE YOUTH OPPORTUNITY For just \$50 per month, one Sudanese student's fees is covered for an entire year! If you or someone you know is interested in sponsoring a student, please contact us for more information. Thanks for your support... Sponsor Coordinator: Sandie Mueller 997-1642, slm1269@sbcglobal.net, www.sudaneseyouthopportunity.org.

BENEFICIO COFFEE It's MORE than fair trade coffee, and the farmers will be happy for your support! To order a 12-ounce bag (\$8.25 each) contact Phyllis Chai, 408/226-7150

OLD EYEGLASSES Do you have old eyeglasses that you are ready to throw out? Bring them to the church and put them in the labeled container in the cabinet just outside the Christian Education and JV Music Director's office. Amy Griffith, 268-0920

THIS COMING SUNDAY'S READINGS: 16 PENTECOST

Want to check out the Scriptures for this coming Sunday?

Note Please!! ECA uses the *first set* of Old Testament readings at the cited link!

Follow this link:

http://www.io.com/~kellywp/YearC_RCL/Pentecost/CProp19_RCL.html

SERVING CHRIST AT WORSHIP THIS WEEK

Lay Readers Robb Moore, Brad Bond, Sharon Mills
Altar Guild Robb Moore, Suzanne Mayo, Colleen DeVoss, Virginia Jones
Acolytes William Bond, Tyler McPherson
Ushers Doug Wood, Steve Wing
Coffee Hosts Kelly Casale, Jerry Long
Greeters Pauline Gilligan, Margaret Halliwell
Counter Roger Hoyt
Flowers Dorothy Willard

ONGOING FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

ADULTS

Men's Thursday Morning Breakfast. 8:00 am at the Country Inn at Camden and the Almaden Expressway.
The Knitwits Knitting Group. Second and Fourth Saturdays. 10:00 – 12:00 noon

TEENS

We have two youth groups, the JHYGs (Junior High) and SHYGs (Senior High). JHYGs meet every other Friday evening SHYGs meet every other Sunday evening for fellowship and activities in the community. Check our website for current information.

ABOUT THIS MID-WEEK E-BULLETIN

E-BULLETIN. Please email your items for this Mid-Week E-Bulletin to newsdesk@eca-sj.org by mid-day Tuesday. If you want off this email distribution, likewise contact the News Desk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS Please submit items for the Sunday bulletin by Tuesday afternoon to newsdesk@eca-sj.org. Father Frank would also like a heads-up on oral announcements during the services. It is always best if there is a written announcement for each oral one made during the service.