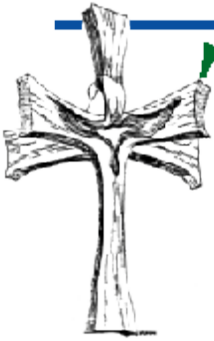




The Episcopal Church IN ALMADEN



THE SHAPE

March 2001

From Nolan

Casting the Net

Dear Family in Christ,

"Drop your nets and follow me, I will make you fishers of (people) men."

Jesus said these words to his newly found disciples as he invited them to become part of his ministry. As his disciples responded to Christ's call to ministry each new follower of Jesus is invited to do the same and proclaim the (good news) Gospel. A fish, over time, became a symbol of our Christian faith and mission. ECA's Vestry has formed it's self with FISH as the sign of our ministry this year.

Our intent is to provide imaginative, creative, loving leadership to our community using the four letters of FISH as our goal.

F

stands for Finance and stewardship. When Jesus first met his disciples they were fishing and having no success. He directed them where to fish and they reluctantly followed his

directions only to discover to their amazement abundance instead of scarcity. It is our challenge to be good stewards of our financial resources focusing on confidence not fear.

I

stands for Illumined. The season of Epiphany, now drawing to a close, is characterized by the prayer asking God to ...Grant that your people, illumined by your Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ's glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth. The disciples followed Jesus to learn how to minister. Their classrooms everywhere that Jesus went. He taught by example. His words changed and opened hearts and his actions became the sacraments that bring the inward grace of God in the outwardly visible forms we use today. We want our worship and education programs to be instruments of this illumination.

S

stands for Shine. Jesus encouraged his followers to: "Let your light so shine before (others) men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." Jesus carried the tradition of his Jewish roots, caring for the disadvantaged, into his ministry. We are reminded to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick and minister to those in prison; this is part of our calling. ECA has a strong history of outreach to those beyond our parish boundaries and the inreach of ministering to those in need in our own parish family. We are committed to keeping these ministries strong and growing.

H

stands for a House for all. The church is often described as God's House in a physical sense. Jesus showed respect for the traditional places of worship for the Jews and urged others to do the same as was demonstrated by his concern about the profanation of the Temple by the merchants and moneychangers. ECA has a unique and wonderful space for worship, education and fellowship and in cooperation with AVUCC on the Joint Venture Board we need to keep in maintained so that it remains welcoming and inviting. The Rectory is one of the prime assets of ECA, assuring that affordable housing will always be available to clergy called to serve here and we must assure that it remains in good condition. Yet, we are using our building assets to the fullest and we still need more space. The Vestry is committed to seeking ways to increase our physical space with the likely addition of another building on the property that will give us additional space for youth, education and alternative worship.

As you can see the Vestry retreat was productive. We are blessed with strong leadership and are in good shape to carry out our ministry as "fishers of others" let's pray that Jesus

will grant us an abundant catch.

In Christ's love,



**Jesus therefore said to them,
"Children, you do not have any fish, do you?"
They answered Him, "No."
And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat,
and you will find a catch." They cast therefore, and then
they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.**

John 20: 5-6



Evangelism & Growth

Therefore we
have been
buried with
Him through
baptism into
death in order
that as Christ
was raised from
the dead
through the
glory of the
Father, so we
too might walk
in newness of
life.

Romans 6:4

The Alpha Course ...It's Happening!

The Alpha Course at ECA is a full house! Twenty one participants gather each Thursday night at the Ferguson's for a lively discussion on the evening's topic over dinner. Everyone is enjoying Nicky Gumbel, the Anglican Priest who developed this course. He presents the material clearly with meaningful examples and humor which holds our attention and gives us much to think about and talk over. We will culminate the first half of our course at the end of March with an all day retreat on the Holy Spirit.

If you are curious about the Alpha Course, the best thing to do is talk to one of the participants and get a first hand impression. Those taking the course this time are Suzanne and Pete Mayo, Betty and Dom Consorte, Carol and Bill MacDonald, Dorothy and Warren Willard, Penny and Jim Sabin, Jackie and Len Whitlock, Jean and Gary Cassetta, Charlotte Boileau, Amy Griffith, Pat McGarvin, Natalie Mena, Ginger Redman, and of course, Susie and Jerry Ferguson. Any of these people would be glad to tell you exactly what they think about the course and the format being used.

One of our goals is to provide an Alpha Course at ECA at least twice each year. So let Susie know if you might be interested in the next course.

- Susie Ferguson



Announcements

Dori's Stole

Deadline is near for Dori's stole. Get your material to Virginia Jones or Penny Sabin! This stole will be given to Dori from ECA at her ordination on Saturday, May 23 at Trinity Cathedral. Party to follow at ECA

Happy Hoofers

The Happy Hoofers are hell bent on a Holy Lent! Care to join them?

Consider joining the Happy Hoofers on Wednesdays during Lent. They meet in the ECA parking lot at 6 a.m., hike up to the library, then to the Country Club, down to Starbucks, pick up coffee, and then back to the church for Morning Prayer at 7 a.m. Rain or shine, frost or freezing. Fun, fellowship and food for the soul!

Ladies Luncheon

On Thursday, March 15 at 11:30 a.m., the ladies will meet at the Rectory. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

UTO

On Sunday, March 25, is the United Thank Offering Ingathering. Bring your blue boxes to church on the 25th of March and place them on the altar. We will take ECA's UTO money to the Ingathering on April 28th in Arroyo Grande.

If you don't have a United Thank Offering box, pick one up on the tract rack and whenever you are thankful for something add some coins to your box. Any questions, ask Ann.



Stewardship

Dear Fellow Members,

We have a minor problem and a major opportunity. The projected revenue for 2001 is going to fall about \$10,000 short of our 2001 Budget. The problem is we might have to cut back several of our ministries. The opportunity is to come up with a painless way to cover this shortfall.

ECA's theme for 2001 is centered around the word FISH so with that in mind we have come up with a simple plan centered around a Fish Bowl. You probably have seen one "floating" around the church in recent weeks. Besides being in the Shape this letter has been mailed to each family with 10 little paper fish enclosed, a fish for each remaining month of this year. On each fish there is a month and place to write your name and a dollar amount. The goal is to drop a fish and your contribution into the fish bowl each month and by yearend we hopefully have covered our shortfall.

We will be blessed with whatever you feel you can contribute. And if you cannot contribute still put the fish in the fishbowl. At yearend we will draw a name from the bowl and the winner will receive a very nice prize. Your chances here are certainly better than with the State Lottery. I think the Lord would approve of our plan.

Sincerely,

The Finance Committee



Joint Venture



Church Library

Our church library is useable again after a long season of neglect. I've reorganized, labeled, discarded, straightened and, yes, even dusted; and my hope is that the area is again welcoming for browsing and borrowing. There is a sign-out sheet on the resource cart where you may check out materials. Returns and donations may also be deposited there. Now that I'm no longer working full-time, I have the time to make available an inventory of the books and tapes by subject. I will put copies of the library list on the cart.

We have some exciting new donations in our library.

Old Turtle by Douglas Wood is a beautifully illustrated prize-winning picture book about the impact of people on God's creation.

In *Circle of Days* by Anne R. Lindbergh, watercolor collages celebrate nature and the seasons.

A Child's Book of Prayer in Art by Sister Wendy shows how looking at art can be a way of discovering faith.

A History of God by Karen Armstrong describes the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This is a book which cannot be read in a night or two, but was so fascinating to so many people that it was on the bestseller list for months!

Attitudes of Gratitude by M.J. Ryan; *Amazing Grace* by Kathleen Norris; and *The Best Christian Writing 2000* by various writers, are all books which do not need to be read cover to cover but can be sampled as time or interest dictate. Reading just a few of the positive meditations in *Attitudes of Gratitude* could make one a little nicer to the world at large, I think! Kathleen Norris' personal, but learned definitions of "prayer," "belief," "silence," and other spiritual topics are always interesting and thought-provoking. I read two essays in *Best Christian Writing* which I liked. "What Shall We Do With Mother?" discusses how we treat our elderly citizens. Another essay, appropriate for February, deals with the life and faith of Abraham Lincoln. Most of the essays are accessible to lay people and cover a wide range of topics.

Last, we have a copy of the bestseller, *Tuesdays with Morrie* in which a famous sportswriter writes about the life and death of his favorite teacher. Morrie's philosophy of life could be summed up in the phrase "love or perish!"

If you have any questions or comments about the library or if you are interested in helping with the library, please contact me at e-mail jjthhoomm@worldnet.att.net, or 978-5477. I could use a helper or two!

- Judy Thompson, UCC



Thank You



Gold Grapes

Have you noticed someone doing something special at ECA that you think should be



praised, thanked, or recognized? That's exactly what Gold Grapes are given for - thanks and recognition for service. This month we give Gold Grapes to:

- Dennis, Ed, Earl and Pete for your willingness to do some preliminary measuring of the Rectory yards;
- Pete for organizing the ECA ski weekend March 2-5;
- Susanne Moore for organizing the Christmas Party committee and lining up the date, now that's what is called planning ahead!!
- God bless you for your service

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God;
and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.
he one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
By this the love of God was manifested in us,
that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world
so that we might live through Him.

1 John 4: 7-9



Prayer Vine Corner

For we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

2 Cor. 3:18

Transformed by Grace

Did you know the Lord is in the business of transforming lives? That's right. He wants to transform each one of us more and more into His likeness during our lifetime. Only one problem, we must be willing to be transformed? And that takes a little bit of effort. First, we must be open to hear His beckoning or feel His nudging? Next, we must take that first step as He calls and leads. Then, we must continue step by step with Him in order to realize the plans He has for us. Exciting. Risky. Rewarding.

Are you up for a challenge? Why not try something for the next "40 days." (For Lent.) Let's pray daily for a transformation in our lives and at Easter let's compare notes and see what happened.

For specific prayer requests of thanksgiving or needs, please call Dorothy Willard @ 268-1212. Dorothy lovingly leads a group of ECA parishioners devoted to intercessory prayer for you.

- Susie Ferguson

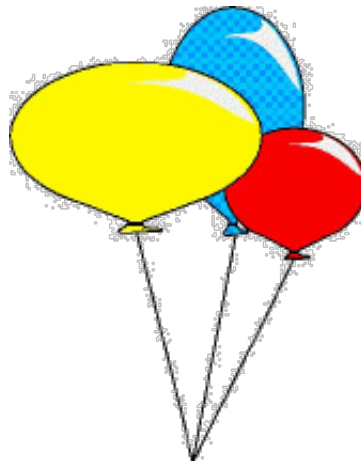


March's Prayer
Soften my heart, Lord,
that I might recognize your spirit within me.
Give me a desire to listen for your voice
and the courage to set forth as you lead me.

Amen.



Happy Birthday
and
Happy Anniversary
to those celebrating
in March



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