

The Shape

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN

FROM STEPHEN

What a grand and glorious Holy Week and Easter it was. No matter what plans may go awry, Jesus still rises from the dead assuring us of life eternal. The church looked especially beautiful this year on Palm Sunday and Easter thanks primarily to Betty Consorte and Aris Thomas. The choirs under the direction of John Leslie did a magnificent job on Maundy Thursday as did the readers for the Last Supper and Tenebrae. Special thanks is also due to Andy Kerr and John Hawes for the wonderful music at the Easter sunrise service. Special thanks also to the 75 who braved the rain and showed up at the park and later Fellowship Hall for the sunrise service. Katie McCormick coped with the inclement weather to pull off the Easter egg hunt in a lull in the rain. Special thanks to everyone for your help in glorifying this, the holiest week of the year. Desi pumped out the bulletins with the gracious volunteer assistance of Mary Leal and Phyllis Chai. All the wonderful images of the day; the beautiful bulletins, the flowered cross, the special music and musicians, baptism and Amber Rose, all these combine to make Holy Week and Easter special in the lives of those who came. Thank you all and bless you!

The special events don't stop there, Kevin Smith was installed as the Pastor of AVUCC on April 23rd. On May 7th, the Reverend Canon Britt Oleson, Canon for Evangelism and Congregational Development will be our preacher at both services. She will also meet with the vestry and offer her considerable knowledge and expertise as a resource to the vestry and congregation.

The following week is Clergy Conference at the St. Francis Retreat Center in San Juan Bautista. Things will be different this year with the clergy meeting on Thursday and Friday (May 11 and 12) and then being joined by the laity on Saturday (May 13) for a joint Stewardship Conference. The details can be found in George Romer's article in this newsletter. If anyone is interested in attending, please let George or me know. We would love to have you join us.

On the Feast of Pentecost we will be blessed to have the Right Reverend Sylvestre Romero as our celebrant and preacher at the 11:00 service. We have a number of candidates for confirmation and Bishop Romero will confirm them at this time. Any adults who desire to be confirmed, received from other denominations, or renew their baptismal vows, should contact me in May. Also on that day we will celebrate the many and varied ministries of the faithful (meaning you). In the Book of Common Prayer it says that the ministers of the church are the *laypeople*, bishops, priests and deacons and I believe that the order is significant. We are blessed in this congregation with very talented people who use these gifts in a variety of ministries in the service of Jesus Christ. Thank you and bless you!!!



Salaam,
Stephen +

From the Editor



This Easter season has reminded me of three things: 1. It's interesting how perspective can change from day to day. 2. It's amazing how quality can imperceptibly decline over time. 3. It's very human to clean up, only when we expect company.

We spent one weekend dumping the odds and ends that collect over the years. This of course involved the ever so popular "date this object game" and the "do you remember when" moments. Date this object is becoming more amusing as I get older. Really, what were we thinking in decades past? Remember old phones? There was a time when being "on the phone" literally meant on the phone. There was only one in the house and it had a 3 inch cord. Then came the "kitchen phone" remember that? It came in some trendy color, avocado, orange, or yellow. The cord shortage had apparently eased by this time and that thing had a cord you could go **ANYWHERE** with.

The weekend prior to Easter we decided to take on our most ambitious project: pouring a new concrete patio. This started off easily enough: grading of the area we intended to pour, set the forms, etc. Sunday was the fun day; we arrived in Lodi early and began our task. As the day went on, a patio turned into a patio and a walkway, which turned into several walkways. The problem was that after we poured the patio, we had ½ a yard of concrete left. Why not form and pour the first walkway? This meant also getting 2 more yards of concrete, which left us with ¾ of a yard left over. This of course meant a mad rush to grade, form, and then try to pour the leftover concrete plus another 2 yards.

My final revelation of quality over time was obvious to me on Easter Sunday as we went out in the driving rain and looked at the beautiful patio we poured the prior week. To the side, we saw the "ok" walkway we poured, and as we rounded the other corner out to the side of the house I wondered what on earth we were smoking. In our haste to go beyond our scope and finish everything, quality suffered, the forms moved, the concrete was a little too hard when poured, and we somehow managed to forget expansion joints. The morals of this story are: Know when to quit. Know your limits. And when quality slips, perhaps you've bitten off more than you can chew.

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN
6581 Camden Avenue, San José, CA 95120
Tel 408-268-0243 • Fax 408-268-4207
www.eca-sj.org

SUNDAY SERVICES
7:30 AM and 11:00 AM

RECTOR
The Reverend Stephen Mills
408-802-5347
rector@eca-sj.org

MINISTRIES

ACOLYTES	Valerie Tysanner
ALTAR GUILD	Elaine LaVallee, Betty Wood
COFFEE HOUR	Pete Mayo
FOLK CHOIR	Andy Kerr
GREETERS	Sharon Mills
GOD SQUAD	Jenny Hoyt
GOOD SAMS	Jenny Hoyt
HANDBELL CHOIR	Maryke Williams
KIDS' BREAKOUT	Leslie Rousseau
LAY READERS	Dennis Moran
MONTGOMERY MEALS	Amy Griffith
NURSERY	Lorry Long
PRAYER VINE	Dorothy Willard
USHERS	Dave Byers
SR HIGH YOUTH GROUP	Robin & Terry Root
JR HIGH YOUTH GROUP	Katie McCormick
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YOUTH SUNDAY	Jim McPherson, Bryan Bond

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MUSIC DIRECTOR, ORGANIST	John Leslie
TREASURER	Maryke Williams
YOUTH DIRECTOR	Katie McCormick
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	Desi Brown

CONTACTING

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EDITOR	Alex Dykes
TELEPHONE NUMBER	408 268-0243
EMAIL ADDRESS	shape@eca-sj.org

The Shape

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FROM THE SR. WARDEN

I love special feast days of worship at ECA. I love when our sanctuary is filled with families and their children and their children's children. I love having to be "cozier in the pews" to make room for new worshipers and guests. I love the stir of excitement and chatter at the beginning of the service as many greet one another and express joy to see one another again. I love how many linger to greet, meet and visit in the sanctuary after the service is over with those who may not drift down to fellowship hall. But mostly, I love **coming to worship** and sharing the celebration of God's grace and love for each one of us with all of you and your families and your friends.

I find it interesting when given an opportunity to reflect on worship most people talk about: the music they like or dislike, the types of sermons they like or dislike, the length of the service they like or dislike, the noise level they like or dislike before or during the service, and the formal or informality of it all. The list goes on and on with each person's preferences, aesthetic preferences. Don't get me wrong, I have my list of preferences just like you, but I come *to worship* even when my aesthetics are not the ones being met on a given Sunday.

In one of my small group Bible studies we looked at how Paul described worship in Romans 12:1-2. "Therefore, I urge you, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as *living sacrifices*, holy and pleasing to God – this is your *spiritual act of worship*. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will." Have you ever considered that worship begins with an attitude of your heart before God and your preferences may only be secondary? Have you ever come to church on Sunday

thinking of yourself as *an offering, a living sacrifice to please God*? If so, how has that attitude changed your worship experience? If not, how might it change your worship experience on Sundays?

For me, when I come to church with the right heart and mind for the Lord, my worship experience is always meaningful. The Lord speaks directly to me with words of encouragement, compassion, understanding, admonitions and challenges. Sometimes He speaks through words spoken in the scriptures or sermons, sometimes through the music, sometimes through quiet silences of prayer, but He always speaks somehow and in some manner regardless of the external preferences around me. I know for worship to be most meaningful it has to begin with my attitude and my heart towards Christ.

Would you like to explore making worship more meaningful for you personally at ECA? Let me hear from you. Perhaps we could consider a discussion group around this topic.

Susie Ferguson
Senior Warden



ECA Life

TAI CHI

Thank you for allowing me to hold a Tai Chi Class at the Joint Venture Church. I have enjoyed teaching this class. We have completed the review of the 36 postures required for the short form and now can perfect the flow of these movements

Tai Chi classes will be ending on May 19 for a summer hiatus. New classes will be available in the fall for beginning and continuing students.

Joan Wagner



JV BOOK CLUB

JV Book Club will meet on May 18, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of Kathy Kisabeth, 312 Los Pinos Way, San Jose. Our book is "When The Emperor Was Divine" by Julie Otsuka. Is a book of enormous power, during a shameful episode of our history. Please respond to Kathy if you are coming, at (408) 227-3898 or to Robyn Dorsey at (408) 323-9230. Thanks.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

In memory of his late wife Anandi, ECA member Michael Cox and Anandi's sisters, Beverly and Colleen, have joined together to raise money for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention ("AFSP"). They will be walking in the "Out of the Darkness" 20-mile overnight walk in San Francisco in July. To participate in the walk, the team needs to raise \$3000 for the non-profit AFSP. Michael has already met his \$1000 goal, so he is asking for future donations to be made to either of Anandi's sisters. They live in Canada and it is difficult for them to raise money in the U.S.

Would you consider donating to the AFSP in this cause? Even a small donation of \$20 or so helps greatly. It does not take many before much is accomplished. Your donations are fully tax deductible. To make a donation, use the printed forms posted on the ECA bulletin board in the community room or donate on-line.

To donate on-line, visit the AFSP homepage: <http://www.theovernight.org>. Click on the "Support a Participant" link, and enter either "Beverly Burry" or "Colleen Myrhaug." A page will come up with Anandi's picture. Click on the "Donate to this Participant" link above Anandi's picture and use the on-line form. This will ensure your donation is properly marked to count toward the \$1000 fundraising goal of either sister. Please give to the sister that has yet to reach the \$1000 goal.

Thank you for your consideration. In this small way together we are helping to transform a terrible loss into positive action to save lives.

DIOCESE WEBSITE

The diocese has a new website address!
www.ecrweb.org

CANS FOR HUMANITY

Thanks to your efforts collecting, saving and delivering aluminum cans to church, we raised \$182 for Silicon Valley Habitat for Humanity in March. Not bad for a wet, wet, February and March! Our next bi-monthly can collection weekend will be May 13 & 14. Look for the Habitat Can sign in front of the church the week leading up to the 13th & 14th and drop those empties off by the enclosed area at the back of the parking lot at that time. Thank you for helping and look for the results of our survey of JV friends' and members' favorite beverages and brands soon.

Tom the Can Man



BENEFICIO COFFEE

To order "Beneficio More Than Fair Trade Coffee", contact Phyllis Chai at (408) 226-7150. The beans are bought from farmers in Costa Rica and roasted at the Sacramento, CA company; they are freshly ground when ordered, and arrive in San Jose in 1-2 days. The Full City mild blend coffee is served at the J.V. churches coffee hours; stronger, French Roast and medium Decaf are also available. Thanks to Kelly, Melanie, Kim, Alex, and Desi!

Phyllis Chai

TAILGATING

An honest man was being tailgated by a stressed out woman on a busy boulevard. Suddenly, the light turned yellow, just in front of him. He did the right thing, stopping at the crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating through the intersection.

The tailgating woman hit the roof and the horn, screaming in frustration as she missed her chance to get through the intersection, dropping her cell phone and makeup. As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up.

He took her to the police station where she was searched, finger printed, photographed, and placed in a holding cell.

After a couple of hours, a policeman approached the cell and opened the door. She was escorted back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal effects.

He said, "I'm very sorry for this mistake. You see, I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, flipping off the guy in front of you, and cussing a blue streak at him. I noticed the "Choose Life" license plate holder, the "What Would Jesus Do" bumper sticker, the "Follow Me to Sunday School" bumper sticker, and the chrome-plated Christian Fish emblem on the trunk. Naturally ... I assumed you had stolen the car."

Dave Byers

SANTA MARIA URBAN MISSION

As many of you know, we have a long relationship with Santa Maria Urban Mission, what many of you may not know, is that Santa Maria Urban Mission is in desperate need of your assistance. Below is a list of our immediate needs. If you can be of any assistance, please contact myself, or Stephen.

1. Assistance with editing, production and distribution of the Canticle Newsletter (Has NOT been published since December 2005!).
2. Volunteers for ABC PLAYTIME Program: Coordinator, Teachers, Leaders and Assistants.
3. Qualified Drivers for food/donation pick up.
4. Funds for Major repairs to vehicles (i.e., brakes, tires, tune ups, etc.)
5. Leaders/Assistants and LIT's (Leaders-in-Training) for STUDIO 17 (Tuesday & Thursday afternoons).

Roger Hoyt

STEWARDSHIP

This is the 3rd installment in a series of Stewardship explorations. These are intended to serve as a basis for our Stewardship Campaign in the second half of this year. Following is a quote which seems to embody the spirit of Stewardship.

People who live well are experts at giving.
They give their money; they give their time.
They share their wisdom and their skills.
They quickly say yes when asked to help.
For them...to give is to love and to love is to live.
It's a formula for a successful life.

—Steve Goodier, Writer

Stewardship has its foundations in the biblical references which are quoted often in the Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren. St. Paul stated in his letter to the Ephesians, "It is God himself who has made us what we are and given us new lives from Christ Jesus; and long ages ago he planned that we should spend these lives in helping others" (Eph 2:10). So, we are reminded by Christ's resurrection that we are renewed in his spirit to do just that. His acts (washing the Apostles feet) at the Last Supper was an explicit example of service. Not that we should go around washing peoples feet but that we should never be so arrogant as to think a service as menial as that is beneath us, if the situation calls for it. Further, the Bible says "[God] has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do." In line with the quote above, a true Christian stops asking "Who's going to meet *my* needs?" and starts asking, "Whose needs can I meet?" Rick Warren makes the point that "what matters is not the duration of your life, but the donation of it"; not how long you lived, but how you lived." So, service is not optional in God's book.

In chapter 30 of Rick Warren's book, he says we are shaped to serve God. What Shape are you

STEWARDSHIP

in? The letters forming the word, SHAPE is used as a memory tool in the Purpose Driven Life.

S = Spiritual gifts – “Christ has generously divided out his gifts to us.” (Eph 4:7). “It is the one and only Holy Spirit who distributes these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.” (1 Corinthians 12:11. We need to decide to use them for his purposes.

H = Heart – “As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the person.” (Proverbs 27:19). And, we all look different.

A = Abilities – “God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well.” (Romans 12:6). Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31). “There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to *all* for their particular service.” (1 Corinthians 12:6). Your ECA Ministry leaders need to know what your abilities are. We need to share that information.

P = Personality – “God works through different people in different ways, but it is the same God who achieves his purpose through them all.” (1 Corinthians 12:6). In other words, some are better suited to one service or other but, the personality which best suits a service needs to be leveraged for the good of all and His glory.

E = Experience – “He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.” (2 Corinthians 1:4). The sum total of experiences and how we handled them to date in our lives is a wealthy “lessons learned” database. We need to feed those experiences into the melting pot for the good of our ECA community. We need to strive for total commitment and involvement in our ECA life.

So, the SHAPE we are in is the some total of our individual Spiritual gifts, the Heart we put in the works we do, the Abilities we bring to the party,

while using our various Personalities, to give of our Experiences for the Glory of God in our ECA community and the world. Our good works will shine so others may see what a great environment in which to thrive and prosper for the good of all. In the coming months we will be putting together a new Time and Talent Survey with which we all will be asked to contribute. When we have gathered all this information we will be poised to leap forward in better SHAPE to greater service in our ECA community. God bless you and yours.

George Romer

Vestry Stewardship Chair

DEFINITIONS

Deadline is an interesting word. It’s origin is an interesting one, it comes from POW camps during the American Civil War, a deadline was literally a line one did not cross under penalty of death. Miriam Webster defines deadline as:

dead·line [dēd' līn'] *n.* **1 a** : a date or time before which something must be done **b** : the time after which copy is not accepted for a particular issue of a publication

If this article has been too subtle, for the Shape this means that all articles **MUST** be in by the **15th**. Starting next month, any thing not received by the 15th will **not** make it into the June Shape. A warning to our gentle readers: be prepared for a “leaflet” instead of a “newsletter” 60% of May came in after the 15th.

Alex Dykes

Music Notes

Holy Week and Easter Music

Thanks to all who helped to prepare and present our wonderful music for Holy Week and Easter services. Thanks to Andy Kerr and the ECA Folk Choir musicians for providing all the music for Palm Sunday. Special thanks to Andy (with Francie and John) for the moving presentation of “Gethsemane” on Palm Sunday. Thanks to all the choir members who joined with the AVUCC choir for the beautiful Joint Venture Maundy Thursday service; and thanks to Ann Mayers for adding her bassoon so beautifully to our hymns and anthems. Thanks once again to Andy, as well as to John Hawes, for assembling and preparing the musicians for the Joint Venture Easter Sunrise Service. Thanks to all who were able to be with us to provide joyful music on Easter morning (both at 7:30am and 11:00am): flute prelude, Communion and postlude music by Francesca (Cox) Anderson, David Hoyt for his trumpet hymn accompaniment, and the choir for the Easter anthem “Break forth into Joyous Singing.”

Summer Musical – Performers and Helpers

Please sign up on the bulletin board outside the Music and Education Office if you are interested in any aspect of our summer musical: performing, sets, costumes, make-up, props, etc.

Summer Musicals - Rehearsals

Music rehearsals will be held on Wednesday evenings at 8:30pm, following the regular AVUCC choir rehearsal. Beginning in June, the entire rehearsal will be devoted to music from the show.

Tap dance classes will be offered on Saturday mornings at 10:00, beginning May 19. Depending on interest and experience, we might offer two classes – one for beginners, and one for those who have had tap dance lessons before. These classes will help prepare anyone interested in being part of the tap ensemble for “Anything Goes.”



We will have a read-thru of Act One script and music for the show on Sunday evening, May 14, at 7:00pm (“Happy Mothers’ Day!”) The full cast is encouraged to attend.

ECA Youth & Family Singers

This group will meet on Thursday, May 25 at 5:30pm for a light supper and rehearsal to prepare music for the May 28 Youth Sunday 11:00am service (Memorial Day weekend). All are welcome – any age – to join us to sing and play this contemporary, praise-style music.

JV Children’s Choir

The JV Children’s Choir will have their final rehearsal on Saturday, May 13. Thanks to all the girls and their parents for their dedication to singing praises to our Lord!

Worship

MORE MUSIC NOTES

JV Bell Choir

The JV Bell Choir continues to rehearse Wednesdays from 4:45-6:00pm. WE are planning a concert for some time late in May, or in June. Please watch for further announcements.

Come, celebrate in your feasting that the God of liberation Brings us to new life, new wholeness, and forgives in joy and love. With voices and happy drumming let us sing the triumph song. God is alive and among us, now our dancing hearts rejoice! Celebrate that Christ is living and then wait for God's great gift: The divine and holy Spirit now may come into our hearts

Mortimer Arias

transl. Roberto Escamillo and Elise S. Eslinger

LAY READERS

Lay Reading at ECA I am pleased to welcome to the Lay Reader Ministry David Hoyt and Bonnie McPherson. They bring their unique talents and personalities to this ministry and will enrich the quality of our worship services by sharing their gifts with us. Each person who volunteers for the Lay Reader Ministry in our church brings their own special talents to our services. Many who lay read are involved in other aspects of service in both churches. If you look around, you will also find lay readers performing in our Adult Choir, Folk Mass Choir, Altar Guild, Hand Bell Choir, Joint Venture Band and the musical productions led by our Music Director, John Leslie, the master of our great pipe less organ.

You will also find lay readers participating in the maintenance of our buildings and grounds, serving at Montgomery Meals and on many of the committees that make both our churches function. Those who serve in these ministries are a witness to God's love working in their lives.

Our lay readers participate in our worship by reading scripture, bearing the chalice during communion, and leading the congregation in prayers and psalms. Each person normally participates in the service once a month.

What are the rewards for a person who chooses to participate in this ministry? Lay reading can help you develop the skills and confidence needed to stand before a group and present information. These skills are valuable in both school and business and our congregation is a very supportive audience. As a chalice bearer you become a facilitator for each person who comes to the altar to receive communion. You get to participate in their special moment where they connect with God as you present them the chalice for their Eucharist. This can be a very spiritual moment for them and for you. If you enjoy simply reading stories aloud to your family and children, this might be a rewarding ministry for you. We will give you the training and support to help you become a more effective speaker and you can add an exciting element to your spiritual journey. If you feel called to this ministry, please call me at (408) 269-0474, or give your name to Stephen, and he will pass it on to me. My thanks to all who take time from their busy lives to participate in this ministry.

Dennis Moran

"Lion-hearted" Lay Reader Leader

Gifts of Gratitude

Sandie & Ed Mueller, Mel Stonehocker, Mary Moran: Thank you for all your wonderful efforts to transform our Picture Board. We love everyone's updated looks. Great job!

Mary Moran: Thank you for the care and mending of our acolyte robes.

Betty Consorte and Ariss Thomas: Thank you for the Palm Sunday decorations in our sanctuary.

Andy Kerr: Thank you for your wonderful offering of song on Palm Sunday. *Gethsemane* is always a very moving moment at that service.

Kimberly Axtell: Thank you for your leadership and inspiration with our Adult Education class during Lent.

David Byers and Warren Willard: Thank you for your willingness to spearhead our summer BBQs.

Desi: Thank you for compiling the ministry "interested parties" listings from the pledge cards.

Susie Ferguson: Thank you for your leadership and healing in a time of conflict.

Kim Petruzzelli: Thank you for all your work with our fabulous ECA website.

Amy Griffith: Thank you for all your organizing of the Women's Luncheons and Dinners.

All at ECA Thank you all the prayers and support as our family grieves the loss of our Jack Bamberger. Those of you who knew him can picture his smile, twinkling eyes and intense desire to be a "life long learner." We all are richer to have had him in our lives. Your love has surrounded us and kept us going. Nancy and George Romer



CALLING 8TH GRADERS!

Terry and I are starting to plan for our coming year and want to make sure that we've identified all current 8th graders at both churches. If you have an 8th grader, even if they currently don't attend youth group, please email both Desi and myself with the name of your teen, their birthdate and the name of the school they will attend in the fall. We are really excited about the coming year and want to make sure each new freshman gets the opportunity to try out SHYGS! The email addresses are: office@eca-sj.org and robinroot@yahoo.com.

The 8th graders we currently have identified are: John Beecher, Bailey Bishop, Monique Rousseau, Marcus Bond, Andrew Garg, Harry Hall, Fallone Kabeja, Doug Lukanc, AJ Nigro, Monique Rousseau, Isaac Tysanner

Worship

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

I recently received a book from Susie called *All Churches Great and Small, 60 Ideas for Improving Your Church's Ministry*, by Kirk and Rosie Farnsworth. The first chapter is entitled, "Why smaller is better." The Farnsworths like small churches better than large. Many of their reasons were uncovered during our Spring Fling Dinner discussions last year. For example, small churches are more intimate. Particularly with our physical layout, we have a very intimate participatory worship service. Intense caring goes on at ECA, as does passionate outreach. On average, studies have shown that 31% of attendees use their spiritual gifts in ministry in small churches whereas in large churches only 17% do. At ECA, I believe the number of people who participate in ministries is much greater than 31%.

The book states that dominating pastors create passive people who want a pastor who can do everything. Pastors should not do the work God has given others in the body to do. The role of the pastor should be one of a "coach". The heart of a healthy church is a covenant community with the coach equipping the members of the church for building one another up in love and reaching out to the community and the world for Christ.

Further, the book claims that ministry will only happen when people use their spiritual gifts to lead in a ministry that God lays on their hearts. The vestry's role should not be to define ministries and then find people to lead them. All of God's children are called to ministry, and those ministries are most successful when they are led by a person with a passion in that area. The Holy Spirit directs believers to initiate ministries consistent with their giftedness. Gift-oriented ministry is a key indicator of church health.

Here at ECA we have all the benefits of the small church, and are blessed with a wonderful "coach" to encourage and equip us for going out and impacting the world. Is there a ministry that God has laid on your heart? Do you have a passion for a ministry that exists at ECA, or might God be calling you to initiate a new one? The harvest is ready but the workers are few. Search your heart and see if you hear God's voice calling you to a new service for Him. Then, please, come and talk to a vestry member or Stephen..

Mary McPherson



RECTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

Check the dates and locations!

In May we will be meeting the first, third, and fifth Wednesdays. May 3 and 31 will be at the Mueller's, which is our regular meeting place. On May 17th we will be meeting at the Ferguson's when Sandie and Ed are out of town. Please make a note on your calendar for this change of location. Remember the Bible Study evening begins at 6:30 PM for a potluck dinner with the Bible study beginning at 7:30 PM. Everyone is welcome. If you cannot make the dinner part, just come for the study. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know scripture and fellow parishioners better.

SHYGS

Do you feel like it's raining so much that you can see the grass grow? While we're all getting a little tired of the wet, it's brought such an abundance of green and flowers and growth that it's also been a good thing. It's that visual sign of spring and Easter that this is a time of rebirth and growth. We see this growth in our SHYGS as well.

March brought Happening! and we had four of our teens attending: Alex Bemis, Josh Bemis and Kristin Petruzzelli all attended the spiritual weekend held at Good Shepard Church in Salinas where they explored their faith and the tremendous love that God has for them. It was wonderful to be able to attend their closing service and to see the dedication of the staff (most of whom are teens) and our SHYGS helping to lead the service.

Our March meeting topic focused on our uniqueness, we explored the scripture from Genesis that describes how God made us in God's image, both male and female. We asked if that meant that God looks like a man and a woman but determined that this scripture doesn't refer to a physical image. We explored the idea that we have the qualities of God: compassion, creativity, personality, consciousness, soul and spirit. This led to an art project that represented what makes us unique. We are growing in our knowledge of who we are!

In addition to the introspection, SHYGS also had a blast on their Tweak Hunt, led again by Kyle Dando. The reports we hear back are that this is a 'must do' every year and that the only request from SHYGS is that the hunt is longer-they can't get enough! Kyle brings a lot of creativity to the events he provides for our teens and we offer up a lot of thanks to him for that.

Speaking of fun and Kyle's creativity, in April he was back with Catacombs! This is the activity that our SHYGS just LOVE every spring. It is the time

where Kyle takes them back to the early days of Christianity when Christians had to meet together in secret down in the catacombs and often evade the Roman soldiers. We thank Kyle and his volunteers for making this another successful evening and also for taking charge of this event so that we could have a weekend away.

Our April topic was centered on our charge to be good stewards of the earth-this was in conjunction with Earth Day on April 22nd. Some of our SHYGS handed out fliers to assist Almaden Valley Counseling Service to get the word out about their E-Waste Collection event on April 27-28th. This event provided free disposal of e-waste and also was a fundraiser for the counseling service. This summer where we will go to Half Moon Bay State Beach and do a cleanup and planting. It will give us a chance to see where we are camping in August!

Coming Up:

Fri-Sun, May 5-7- Heifer Global Village Experience-Ceres, California-We leave late Friday afternoon and return Sunday afternoon

Sunday, May 21-Car Wash (Tickets will be sold during coffee hour on May 7 and May 14) (This event is a 'all hands on deck' event-every SHYG is to attend if all possible)

Sunday, May 28-Go Karts-Malibu Grand Prix

Sunday, June 4-Regular Meeting 6:30

Saturday, June 17th-Attend Greg Lukanc's Eagle Scout ceremony

Sunday, June 18th-Regular Meeting

Robin Root