

# The Shape

February 2007 Issue

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN

FROM STEPHEN

*The following is a response to the San Jose Mercury News publishing an article on January 10 2007 written by the rector and a layperson in an Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia which is in the process of leaving the Episcopal Church. It was part of my sermon on January 14<sup>th</sup>.*

Dear Editor,

I remember being in Jerusalem with a group of clergy and hearing a Palestinian lawyer telling us the biggest obstacle to peace in the Middle East was the extremists on both sides. The next night a Jewish rabbi came in and told us the exact same thing. The same is true of the Episcopal Church. The biggest obstacle to resolving the current conflicts are the extremists on both sides. So, why does the Mercury News give a third of a page to the extremists who want to leave and are leaving the Episcopal Church?

I find it ironic that the extremists begin by objecting to the characterizations their opponents have given them and then proceed to tar us, the vast majority of centrist Episcopalians, with the broad brush of the extremists on the other side. I resent the way I am characterized in this article as unbelieving, apostate, choosing culture over the bible, and abandoning the great truths of the bible. I do not believe that I am any of those things. I do understand that the extremists have a great yearning to return to simpler times when everything was clear, right and wrong, good and bad, black and white. Unfortunately, those times never existed in reality and only exist in the TV shows of the 50's where the good guy wore the white hat and the bad guy wore the black hat and the good was good through and through and the bad was bad through and through.

Perhaps it is presumptuous of me to try to speak for the great centrist majority of Episcopalians, but I would like to tell you what I and what, I believe, the great majority of Episcopalians believe. We believe in the great tenets of the Christian faith, but we do not presume to understand them fully. How can you explain the incarnation or the crucifixion and resurrection as other than as unspeakable acts of love far beyond human comprehension or understanding?

We believe that there is a God, who is not primarily a righteous judge, but a loving parent. We believe that the bible is the Word of God; is the story of God's interaction with humanity; and ultimately points the way to that God. We believe that the bible is not primarily a rule book to be followed but a love story to be lived. We believe it is God and not the bible that is to be worshipped. We understand that the extremists want to interpret the bible literally, or at least parts of it literally, the parts that they choose. We remember Jesus saying "If your right hand causes you to sin cut it off, and if your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out." And so we never trust two handed two eyed literalists. We do not believe that the bible can be read literally in its entirety but must be understood and interpreted. Because life changes and because the bible is a living document so too our understanding of the bible will change. We can no longer use the bible to justify slavery or prohibition as previous generations have done. In understanding and interpreting the bible we can and must use insights from other disciplines like psychology, sociology, astronomy, and biology in our interpretation and understanding.

*[Continued on page 4]*

# From the Editor



It seems that this month the *San Jose Mercury News* has managed to get up a few people's noses, mine included. You will be relieved to hear that it had nothing to do with Stephen's article and everything to do with hybrid cars. On January 18, columnist Gary Richards wrote the following:

*There are several goals behind carpool lanes:*

- *Get more solo drivers out of their cars. The law allowing solo drivers in hybrids that get 45 mpg or better to use carpool lanes doesn't help here.*
- *Reduce congestion. A slight plus for hybrids.*
- *Cut down on gas use. Hybrids are a big winner. Even at highway speeds, they get more than 45 mpg.*
- *Reduce smog. Hybrids are a big, big winner. A 2007 Toyota Prius emits just one-third the emissions of an ultra-low-emission 2007 Camry. Compared with an older car, it spews out about 80 percent less smog. A study by the University of California-Davis found that if hybrids were to make up 10 percent of the miles driven in the United States, they would save more than 5 billion gallons of gas a year and greenhouse-gas emissions would drop by 42.4 million metric tons.*

The logic applied here and in previous articles simply makes me scratch my head. While it is true that a hybrid uses less gasoline per mile than the average car, a carpool moves two people for its emissions and gas consumption and a solo drive in a hybrid moves only one. When you look at this with a critical mind then the hybrids are not winners in any regard and the reasoning behind them being allowed in the carpool lane is dubious.

**Reduce congestion:** Actually, they just shift the congestion to the carpool lane. There is no reduction in the number of cars on the road, in fact there is less incentive to carpool when you can ride solo in the carpool lane, so how does this solve anything? There are now 80,000 solo hybrid drivers in California, more than half of them in the Bay Area. It's human nature, if I had a hybrid, would I go out of my way in any measure to carpool? Probably not.

*[Continued on page 7]*

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN  
6581 Camden Avenue, San José, CA 95120  
Tel 408-268-0243 • Fax 408-268-4207  
[www.eca-sj.org](http://www.eca-sj.org)

SUNDAY SERVICES  
7:30 AM and 11:00 AM

RECTOR  
**The Reverend Stephen Mills**  
408-802-5347

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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
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SR HIGH YOUTH GROUP	Mike & Desi Brown
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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	

## CONTACTING

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EDITOR	Alex Dykes
TELEPHONE NUMBER	408 268-0243

*The Shape*

THE SHAPE IS USUALLY A MONTHLY PUBLICATION  
OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN

## FROM THE SR WARDEN

Effective communication is a challenge to everyone, everywhere and every time we turn around. It's a challenge right here in this newsletter. Is our information within it timely, relevant, noteworthy, and important? How about necessary? Contributors often ask, "Does anyone read it? Does anyone care?"

Effective communication is a challenge to your vestry as they work together to help lead ECA into its future. Each member brings goals, aspirations, and passions for ECA that need to be understood and appreciated by fellow members. Then as a group the vestry must search for effective ways to inspire parishioners to participation and action into the life of our church and community.

Effective communication is a challenge for every ministry and activity at ECA. Every group wants to be understood as to what they are about and how they might change your life for the better as you share in their ministry or activity.

I think God even struggles with effective communication. Or at least from the standpoint, "Is anyone out there listening? Can anyone hear me?" I wonder how many times and in how many ways He sends a message and it is ignored, overlooked, or just crowded out in our over busy, noisy lives. I wonder if He ever asks, "Does anyone read it? Does anyone care?"

*Susie Ferguson*  
*Senior Warden*



## BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

### Anniversaries

Gary & Edie Keck	1
Len & Jackie Whitlock	3
Tim & Donna Miller	19
Jon & Sharon Mills	27

### Birthdays

Alyce Gallego	2
Bailey Bishop	5
Dan Degnan	5
Pete Mayo	6
Ellen Lukanc	7
John McPherson	7
Ryan McPherson	7
Virginia Jones	14
Andy Kerr	15
Jeff Nollette	16
Monique Rousseau	16
Mary McPherson	18
Zachary Nollette	21
Taylor Mills	23
Mel Stonehocker	24
Elizabeth Hoyt	25
Terry Root	26
Kimberly Axtell	27
Brooke Mills	27

## EXTREMIST ANGLICANS

*[Continued from cover]*

We do not believe that just because the disciples Jesus chose were male that He intended that for all times and in all places all clergy should and must be male. We are proud to have a woman serving as our Presiding Bishop.

We understand that the Anglican approach to faith has never been *sola scriptura* as the extremists assert but has always been the a melding and blending of scripture, reason and tradition with reason not being pure logic but insights from other disciplines as well as the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We are concerned with sin but not overly worried about it. We find it incredibly presumptuous of people and groups to tell God who God can let into heaven and who should be excluded. We understand that only one group of people ever gets into heaven and that group is sinners. When it comes to sin, we are much more concerned with the hungry in San Jose or the starving in Africa than we are with who might be sleeping with whom. We do not presume to fully understand why some of us are homosexual and some heterosexual, but we believe that all God's children should be treated with dignity and respect and that none should be discriminated against. We believe in a church which is big enough to encompass even the extremists on both sides and we value their voices.

We understand why newspapers quote extremists almost exclusively, but we believe when they do so they do not paint a true picture of whom and what we are.

Yours in Christ,



Stephen Mills

## SMALL GROUPS

In the January issue of The Shape, you probably find in it a poem entitled "Lonely in a Crowd." This poem expressed some of my reflections on the small group experience in which I have been privileged to share for over two years now. During that time I have developed close relationships with eight other people, most of whom I did not know well when the group began. Our church is a wonderful, loving place. But it is a different experience to share on a deep level with a few others while coming to a fuller knowledge of God's love and His words.

As Mary McPherson said in her article in the December Shape, there was informational/exploratory meeting on developing small groups on Monday, January 15 at 7:30PM at the home of Peter and Suzanne Mayo. If you would like to join any of these groups, there is a sign up sheet in fellowship hall. Also, any of the following will be glad to answer any questions: Debbie Bishop, Susie Ferguson, Mary Leal, Carol MacDonald, Peter and Suzanne Mayo, Mary McPherson, Martha Lou Reynolds and Sam Sarmecanic. Everyone is welcome to attend, and attending does not commit you to anything. Please come if you can.



# ECA Life

## BISHOP SHALITA

This letter of thanks was received from Bishop Shalita for the donations that were raised from the tea and vignettes of San Jose history. Thank you all again for helping the orphans.

Greetings from Joy and I. We hope you had good time at Christmas and the New Year's Day.

We celebrated Christmas with one of our daughters and her husband and six grand children. The daughters who were not able to come and be with us sent grandchildren.

We very much thank you for the support we received from you and members of the church for the orphans' ministry. My daughter Enid has already informed me that she received the check for \$ 1834. Thank you very much for the work you do to assist us. The board members and the parents/guardians of the children are always delighted to hear what the brethren are doing for us. Very soon we are going to have the board meeting and I will give them the report of what you are doing. I may come over for the ministry next month. So far I am waiting to receive the itinerary from African Team Ministries.

I wish you a prosperous new year.

Bishop E. M. Shalita

## STEWARDSHIP

We have not reached our last year's pledged amount. As of this writing (1/15/07) we lag last year's results. If you have pledged, thank you. If you have not, please don't drag out the drama any longer. We need your participation, regardless of the amount. The good news is almost a third of us have increased our pledges by almost \$350. Thank you for your faith.

Total Pledged in 2006 was \$214,960 and the number of pledging units was 79, down from 2005 total of 83 but total \$ was up from the 2005 number of \$203,500. Currently, we stand at 76 (96% of last year's count) pledging units submitted. The Total Pledged is \$193,180 (90% relative to last year's total) which calculates to \$2,542 per pledge, down from \$2,721 of 2006. So far, 39% of respondents have submitted Time & Talent Surveys. The remaining outstanding previous pledgers (3-7) could bring our final pledge total in the range of \$210,000 to \$201,000. Pledge breakdown relative to 2006 as of 1./15/07 is in the following table:

### 2007 Pledges which were. . .

New: 5, Increased: 23, Decreased:10

Not Changed from last year: 37, Not pledging: 3

Moving: Total 79

Please return your Campaign materials (Time & Talent Survey and Pledge Cards) in sealed envelopes to ECA at the Offertory on Sundays, to Dennis in the office, or to Maryke Williams as soon as you can. The Vestry is faced with having to make severe cuts in spending plans for 2007, relative to 2006.

*George Romer*

*Vestry Stewardship Chair*



## GIFTS OF GRATITUDE

*Mary McPherson:* Thank you for your work in organizing and booking the vestry retreat at Presentation Retreat Center.

*Betty and Dom Consorte, Colleen and Hank De Voss, Carol MacDonald, Sharon and Jon Mills, Sandie and Ed Mueller, Mary & Dennis Moran:* Thank you for providing locations for our Rector Bible Study. Your hospitality is a blessing.

*The ECA Vestry:* Thank you for your dedication and generosity of time participating in our weekend vestry retreat.

*Inge Bond, Tim Miller, and Sandie Mueller:* Thank you for your special help and contributions to our vestry retreat.

*John Leslie:* Thank you for your planning and organization of our Epiphany Talent Show.

*Dennis Elliot:* Thank you for your help in our church office.

## RECTOR'S BIBLE STUDY

Rector's Bible Study begins again this month. Check the schedule and locations in the Sunday bulletin or on our website. We are very excited with this year's new plan having several different families hosting each time we meet. Try to join us somewhere along the way for fellowship and conversation and a new look into God's Word.

This Bible study meets the first, third and fifth Wednesday evenings beginning with a potluck supper at 6:30 PM with those who wish to join us for dinner. Others join the group at 7:30 PM to study the readings for the following Sunday. No prior knowledge or study is required. Just come, make new friends, and open your heart and mind to hearing the Lord speak.

Rector's Bible Study Upcoming Dates and Locations:

February 7 at the home of Betty & Dom Consorte  
6611 Bubblingwell Place

February 21 at the home of Sandie & Ed Mueller  
1269 Peralta Drive

March 7 at the home of Colleen & Hank De Voss  
6572 Camelia Drive

March 21 at the home of Carol MacDonald  
6582 Tam O'Shanter

April 4 to be announced

April 18 at the home of Mary & Dennis Moran  
3778 Norcliff Court

## SOLO CARPOOL = OXYMORON?

[Continued from page 2]

**Fuel consumption:** Hybrids are a BIG loser in this category compared to carpools. Not only do they not live up to their EPA estimates in real world use, but even if you use the EPA numbers as a comparison, a Toyota Camry or Honda Accord that gets 34MPG (EPA) on the highway gets an equivalent 68MPG per person in the lane. If you go by *Motor Trend's*

observed economy of 41.6MPG highway in the Prius, then even a number of full size luxury cars with two people spend less gasoline per person and the hybrid Civic fares worse. As a hybrid ages, its fuel economy is reduced far more significantly than a normal car since the batteries can no longer hold the same amount of energy as when they were new. Nickel Metal Hydride batteries have a standard cycle durability of between 500-1000 complete charge/discharge cycles. Hybrids extend this lifetime by charging the batteries only to 75% capacity and discharging them no lower than 45% capacity, but this only helps lengthen their operational lifetime, it does not prevent them from degrading.

**Emissions:** I'm not sure where Gary got his numbers, but if you check on the EPA's web site [www.fueleconomy.gov](http://www.fueleconomy.gov) and take a look you'll find that the annual greenhouse gas emissions of a Prius is 3.4 tons, and a Civic Hybrid is 3.7 tons. The Camry is 6.6 and

the Accord is 6.4. Consequently, assuming a carpool in the regular car, the Prius is producing .2 tons MORE greenhouse gas emissions per person than the regular

Camry and .4 MORE tons per person than the Accord. The Civic fares worse at .8 tons MORE than the regular Camry and 1 ton MORE than the Accord. Keep in mind this is when the car is new, as the

batteries age, the emissions numbers will rise as the engine must run longer and more often to perform the same amount of work.

Bottom line, when you look at the numbers and do the math, there is no logical reason why these vehicles are allowed solo in the carpool lane. Yes, they get better gas mileage, yes they produce lower emissions, but to claim that they somehow are the equivalent of a carpool is insane. In fact, full hybrid cars produce fewer emissions and consume less gasoline per mile in stop and go traffic so all logic points to them not being given this special privilege. I'm in favor of hybrid technology, if we all drove one, we'd be using less oil and polluting less, but let's face it, they are not twice as clean and twice as fuel efficient, it's a good improvement, but not a revolution.

*Alex Dykes*



# Adventure in the Arts

## A TOUCH OF BRASS

A Touch of Brass, the noted local 18-piece Big Band, will perform here on Saturday, February 24 at 7:30 as part of the Joint Venture Churches' concert series.

The band incorporates brass, woodwinds, rhythm and two vocalists to cover all styles from Swing, Latin, Blues, Rock and Ballads to Swinging Gospel.

Some of the more prestigious San Francisco Bay Area (and beyond) companies and organizations the band has performed for include; Nestle, Del Monte, Hills Bros., Monterey Bay Aquarium, Mark Hopkins Hotel, USS Hornet, San Francisco Chamber Symphony, Santa Clara University, Make a Wish Foundation, March of Dimes, Diabetes Association, The Dolphin Club, and many others.

The band also makes frequent appearances at local music festivals including the San Jose Jazz Festival.

Check out their website at [www.atouchofbrass.net](http://www.atouchofbrass.net)

Advance tickets are \$15 general, \$8 students and \$5 children (\$20, \$10 and \$5 respectively at the door). Child care will be provided. For reservations or more information, please call (408) 268-0243.

