

# The Shape

## FROM STEPHEN

In May, we had a grand and glorious gathering to honor our Sunday School Teachers, provide our youth with Scriptures, and to celebrate Mother's Day. The sanctuary was packed. Both congregations were well represented. Gifts were given to all the Sunday school teachers, fifth-grade youth, and mothers. After that we celebrated with a wonderful barbeque. Then everybody went home and decided to take the summer off. That's right our 10:30 attendance has been sparse to say the least. I wonder what that is saying. I know that attendance is always lower in the summer and know that many of you are out of town traveling and vacationing this summer. I know that your schedules are incredibly busy. I know this is not just an ECA issue, as I was talking to one of my colleagues at a church down the road last week and I asked him how his summer was going. He said fine, but nobody is in church this summer.

I am also aware that churches are always in transition and that the culture of ECA is also changing. I know that change is never easy and for some it is nigh on to impossible. I also know that for many of you that the vital, nurturing community you knew in the past no longer feels familiar, settled, or yours. For some, an incident may have occurred and, rather than deal with it or confront it, you

*"We are still seeking ways to improve and refine our worship. This process takes time and at least some trial and error."*

decided to walk away. I have tried to contact most of you directly, but have been largely unsuccessful. I would love to talk with you at any time. My door is always open to you. If you believe that I am the problem, please come talk to me about it. You may well be right. I do not have all the answers. I make mistakes. My only request is that I would prefer to hear what you like and would want to see rather than what you dislike or don't want to see.

If you believe something is missing in our worship that is important to you, please let me or a member of the Worship Committee know. We are still seeking ways to improve and refine our worship. This process takes time and at least some trial and error. At the last Music Committee meeting we decided to keep Youth Sunday, but not to continue the Youth Band and Youth Music in its present form. We will have at least two special Youth Worship events in the coming year on Saturday nights. At those events we will either hire or train youth musicians to perform. I am grateful that Andy Kerr will be working

*[Continued on page 5]*

# From the Editor



**W**hat is faith? Do I believe? My best friend has been questioning his faith and pondering these mysteries has occupied my mind as of late. I have always loved this line from *Waiting for God*: “Faith is what helps you make the quantum leap from the impossible to the totally bloody insane.” The essence of the line is correct. Faith is: believing that which **cannot be proven**.

Trouble is; I *like* certainty. I *like* tangibility. I *like* knowing that what I know is *correct*. I *like* statistics, *and* specifications, things based on *reality*. There is no proof in faith, no certainty. We can’t just go see God and verify he exists, if only it were that easy.

It seems that some people – like my friend – start to question faith when they pursue advanced degrees in the sciences. I can understand this, since “education” is calling you to only believe what you see and can prove, but proof is contrary to the nature of faith.

I’ve never had an omnipresent voice narrating my life. I think it is difficult to have a relationship with someone you can’t see, and can’t talk to (literally). Also, I don’t like the phrase “relationship with God” come to think of it. Perhaps ask yourself instead: “do you live your life as Christ has directed?” Or “do you have faith in God?” These are really the direct questions, without the metaphor. Unfortunately living your life as Christ directed doesn’t cause sensational news, nor does it create great “stand up, preach ‘em out” sermons. Christ was very touchy feely, love everyone, turn the other cheek and do what is *right*. Personally I think that if you attempt to live your life in this fashion, then it doesn’t matter whether you believe 100% in what the bible says *literally*, because you are already living a faith based life. You are living having the faith that you are doing what is “right” and that seems Godly to me. I can’t say I have faith without doubt, but neither can I say I lack faith. Perhaps I want to believe that there is a God? I want to believe there is some overriding good and reason in the world? But then again, that sounds like faith and belief. This is the way of life, and what it is to be human.

Alex Dykes

## THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN

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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             | Pauline Gilligan            |
| PRAYER VINE         | Dorothy Willard             |
| USHERS              | Dave Byers                  |
| SR HIGH YOUTH GROUP | Mike & Desi Brown           |
| STEWARDSHIP         | George Romer                |
| JR HIGH YOUTH GROUP | Katie McCormick             |
| WORSHIP             | Sandie Mueller              |
| WEBMASTER           | Kim Petruzzelli             |
| YOUTH SUNDAY        | Jim McPherson, Bryan Bond   |

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| MUSIC DIRECTOR, ORGANIST | John Leslie     |
| TREASURER                | Maryke Williams |
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*The Shape*

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

# ECA's Senior Warden

## From Susie

Last month I reflected in this column about a God Hunt. And, as a number of you suspected, no one called, wrote, commented or shared any "God sightings." I know, without any doubt, God was about in our lives, in our work, in our families, and in our environment. Unfortunately, many of us choose not to share the presence of Christ as witnessed in our everyday existence. What a regret and loss for all of us!

You see, sharing your faith stories not only validates your own growth but helps others grow in their own faith journeys as well. I believe it is one of our responsibilities as a faith community (ECA) to help one another in our searching and growing of a deeper faith and stronger connectedness to Christ and to one another. One way to do this is to share our faith stories and God sightings with one another. Do you want to consider places and opportunities where you could do that?

One suggestion I might make is at the Rector's Bible study. It begins again this month. During the evenings we share food, fellowship, read scripture, ask questions, and share our thoughts, understandings, and reflections on God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Details of times and locations are in this edition of the Shape. Consider joining us or another opportunity offered at ECA.

Remember, the best way to grow your faith is in community with others. We are blessed at ECA with many faith stories and journeys. Connect with us and let's continue growing together.

*Susie Ferguson*

## Bible Study

ECA offers a Wednesday evening Bible Study on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday evenings of the month. During June and July there are a number of events conflicting with our scheduled Wednesdays. The study will resume on **August 15** at the home of Melinda Jennings and Ron Howie. Thank you, Melinda and Ron, for helping us start our new season of study.

Mark your calendar for these dates and locations:

**August 15** at the home of **Melinda and Ron**,  
425 Mat Avenue

**August 29** at the home of **Melinda and Ron**,  
425 Mat Avenue

**Sept. 5** at the home of **Betty & Dom Consorte**,  
6611 Bubblingwell Place

**Opportunities continue, could you help and host one evening?** Open dates include: Sept. 19, Oct. 3, 17, & 31, Nov. 7.

We sincerely appreciate all those who are able to open their homes to us for an evening of Bible Study. If you are able to host an evening for us please contact Susie Ferguson at (408) 997-0107 to secure your date.



## Disaster Preparedness

A class on Home & Family Disaster Preparedness was conducted by the San Jose Office of Emergency Services in Fellowship Hall on Saturday, July 14. It was well received by thirty five members of JV and will be repeated again in the fall. All families are encouraged to attend future offerings of either this two hour (free) class or the federal (\$40) CERT program held downtown.

Staffing of the six JV specialist teams is almost complete although the Planning team is looking for two or three more folk for the Care & Shelter team and the Fire Suppression team. We encourage sign up on the Disaster Preparedness Board in Fellowship Hall.

Locations of all JV congregants have been plotted on a map and we anticipate all teams will convene in September now that initial program planning has been completed.

Remember our slogan: "The only thing tougher than planning for a disaster is explaining why you didn't."

*Ed Grossmith*

## Camping

It was late March when we realized that the annual ECA camping weekend was not on our activity calendar. I have always enjoyed this event, and knowing that in 2006 we skipped it, I felt obligated to organize this trip on short notice. Miraculously, our favorite site at Big Sur still had one weekend in May available.

The true and hardy camp folks among us drove down Friday evening May 4th, eager to spend as much quality time as possible in Big Sur. Debbie Bishop (who would have thought) and Alex Bishop, Ryan McPherson and Ryan Hall came early. Debbie opted to stay at the local Inn, with the assurance she would not have to burn incense to chase the bugs away. Everyone else was looking forward to some *real* camping.

The next day another six people drove down, some just for the day: Suzanne and Pete Mayo, Jon and Taylor Mills, and I (Hans Spanjaart). When I arrived at the campsite, it was completely deserted. I unpacked, set up my tent (I did bring the tent poles this time around), and waited for everyone to return, assuming they were all hiking somewhere nearby. While I was sipping a cool white wine and enjoying the tranquility of this beautiful little river, Pete came down and rescued me. Instead of a sturdy hike, they were enjoying their wine at a restaurant near by!

After putting up the foundation for a hardy meal, we moved to the camping site where we roasted the catch of the day. Subsequently we recycled the wood we brought, and either burnt or caramelized our *sugar-on-a-stick* deserts. A fun time was had by all.

## Camping

On Sunday, five of us got up early enough to (barely) catch the 10am tour of Point Sur Light-house. This is a 3-hour educational tour, but above all, one has majestic views of the California coastline.

Hopefully, you will be able to join us next time. That the ECA Camping trip is a historic event, going back almost 40 years, so let's see everyone there next time!

*Hans Spanjaart*



## Stephen

*[Continued from cover]*

with Katie McCormick and John Leslie on those events. This is just one example of how we are trying to refine and redefine our worship to better reflect who we are and to better invite people into experiencing God in their lives.

I need a weekly experience of corporate worship in my life just as surely as I need air, water and food. I need the opportunity to celebrate God's presence in my life and in the life of the gathered community. I need to hear about God's Kingdom to counterbalance the big, blaring, banal voice of our popular culture which seems to scream out that money and power are the most important things in life. I need to hear over and over again that love is stronger than death, and that death is only the gateway to a new and richer life. I need to know that God, our God, is a loving and forgiving God who chiefly expresses power by showing mercy - a God who invites us continually to bask in love and grace.

It grieves me deeply that some have fallen away. It grieves me that our attendance has been so low lately. I would like to invite you back. I promise that you will be welcomed with open arms. Let us build anew. Let us rebuild together. Let us celebrate God's love. You are important. If you are not here, you are missed. This is your home on earth.

*Yours in Christ,  
Stephen +*

## Stewardship

**A**s a reminder (i.e., Save the Date) our Time, Talent, Treasure, & Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner will be on November 17, Saturday at 6:00 pm. On that date we will join to share a Special Guest Dish Potluck Dinner (“What would I bring if I knew Jesus was coming?”) and share our thanksgivings during the Offertory leading to Holy Communion in the sanctuary.

As we prepare for our special ECA thanksgiving, following are some thoughts by those who went before us on the subject:

God gave us our relatives; thank God we can choose our friends.

*Ethel Watts Mumford*

Thanksgiving Day, a function which originated in New England two or three centuries ago when those people recognized that they really had something to be thankful for – annually, not oftener – if they had succeeded in exterminating their neighbors, the Indians, during the previous twelve months instead of getting exterminated by their neighbors, the Indians. Thanksgiving Day became a habit, for the reason that in the course of time, as the years drifted on, it was perceived that the exterminating had ceased to be mutual and was all on the white man’s side, consequently on the Lord’s side; hence it was proper to thank the Lord for it and extend the usual annual compliments.

*Mark Twain*

Stay tuned; live the Gospel!

*George Romer*

## Are Christians going Extinct?

**H**ave you ever heard the statement, “Christianity is just one generation away from becoming extinct?” When you think about it, it’s true. What a scary thought. But the bible is full of stories about the Israelites being saved by God, then a few generations later, forgetting all that God had done for them. They would lose interest in Him, and stray off course, often being swept up by cultural influences to follow the latest trend in “gods.” Then God gets angry, and gets their attention with a catastrophe or a threat, and they find him again. Does that sound at all familiar? So how do we keep our faith going?

Within ourselves, we must take time to regularly reflect on what God has done for us. I have a very short attention span, and suspect I am not alone. Keeping a prayer journal helps me focus my thoughts, but it could do more than that if I only remember to read it now and then. Very rarely, I think to read what I wrote a week or a month before. I had the experience of doing that recently, and was amazed at the orchestration of events culminating in a decision I believe God led me to. What a faith builder. Gratitude filled my heart.

In the world around us, how do we keep the Christian faith alive - not just maintaining, but growing? By sharing our faith stories with our friends, and our families, especially our children. That’s not easy for me. But it’s something I know God is calling me to do.

*Mary McPherson*

## Story of Elijah

The Sunday school teacher was carefully explaining the story of Elijah the Prophet and the false prophets of Baal. She explained how Elijah built the altar, put wood upon it, cut the steer in pieces, and laid it upon the altar. And then, Elijah commanded the people of God to fill four barrels of water and pour it over the altar. He had them do this four times.

“Now,” said the teacher, “can anyone in the class tell me why the Lord would have Elijah pour water over the steer on the altar?”

A little girl in the back of the room started waving her hand, “I know, I know,” she said, “to make the gravy!”



## 2008 Soup Calendar

**T**he Almaden Adventures in the Arts Committee is in the process of designing a wall calendar for the calendar year 2008.

This will be in recognition of our Soup, Salad and Sound organ recitals. Each calendar month will feature a different soup recipe, plus a picture of the chef creating his or her culinary “magic” on the top portion of the calendar, and the standard calendar format will be printed on the bottom portion.

If you have a soup recipe you would like included in this Joint Venture calendar, please submit it to John Leslie at [music@jointventurechurches.org](mailto:music@jointventurechurches.org) by October 1. The calendar will include all of the dates for our concerts, as well as important festival services and special occasions in the lives of our AVUCC and ECA communities.

We plan to have these printed and ready for sale for special gift giving for the Christmas holidays. Please share one of your favorite soup recipes with us all!

John Leslie  
Almaden Adventures in the Arts

## Pass the Pictures

**A**s part of our 40th anniversary celebration, I'm gathering interesting photographs from the past. The idea is that we'll have a slide show projected for everyone to enjoy.

If you have any pictures related to our history, which you would like to share, please make those available to me. If you have them already digitized, it would be great just to receive a copy on CD. If you have prints, the best is to make copies before you send them to me. Otherwise make sure you put the prints in an envelope with your name and telephone number on it. You can leave anything at my mailbox at the church.

And for now, do you recognize people on this picture? (*below*)

*Hans Spanjaart*

## Morning Bible Study

**P**lan ahead! Join us starting September 13th, meeting regularly on Thursday mornings from 10-11:30, for a study of the book of John. John's gospel is not like the other three. Instead of being about Christ's life, it is a powerful argument and demonstration that Jesus was and is the heaven-sent Son of God. We hope you will come and join our group!

*Mary McPherson*





# ECA Life

## The \_\_ Annual Men's Steak & Stein

When: Saturday, September 8, 2007  
Where: ECA  
Who: Adult Men of ECA and UCC.  
How Much: To be determined  
Time: 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.  
Entertainment: There never has been.  
Menu: We have food and drink on the menu.

Committee: (So Far)  
David Byers (408) 268-0448  
Mark Ciccarello (408) 268-5640  
Warren Willard (408) 268-1212  
Mike Reilly (408) 268-3228

As we get closer to this very popular event, we will have it all figured out. There will be a sign-up and for those so inclined, a list of things to help us put this function on. Some people refer to those things as scut work. Others call it helping out. We prefer the latter.

*The Committee.*



## July Birthdays

|                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| Kristen Petruzzelli | 6  |
| Kele Lavery         | 7  |
| Bethany Nollette    | 11 |
| Sarah Dunn          | 13 |
| P.J. Gallego        | 13 |
| Jessica Skowronski  | 14 |
| Roget Hoyt          | 16 |
| David Byers         | 17 |
| Davit Hoyt          | 19 |
| Robb Moore          | 22 |
| Eric McCormick      | 23 |
| Allan Jones         | 24 |
| Jim Wooldridge      | 25 |
| Erinn Hoyt          | 29 |
| Frances Sandrock    | 30 |

## July Anniversaries

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| Jerry & Lorry Long    | 19 |
| Jack & Winnie Jackman | 20 |

# Youth

## Sunday School '07-'08

**S**unday School begins on Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> this year. There are 29 days of lessons this “year.” Our goal is to have three teachers for every grade so each teacher has only 10 classes to worry about. There will be a teacher’s meeting on Sunday, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> at 12pm in the youth center, I’ll pass out teacher’s books and go over any questions you may have. We will continue with the Hands-On bible curriculum in the younger grades, Godly Play for the 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> grade class, and 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade will use Bible Basics, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> will continue with creative bible lessons. High school classes will include lessons from Velocity. Please contact me if you would like to participate in this important ministry. (408) 838-6143

*Katie McCormick*



## JHYGS Beach Trip

**T**he beach trip started on a very dreary day last week and we wondered if we would get there and turn back around but turned out OK. The temperature was mild and it was overcast but that didn't stop anyone from going in the surf or digging for sand crabs. By 1:45 the sky was blue and it was a marvelous day.

*Katie McCormick*



## Movie Night

**O**ur first movie night of the summer was attended by about 15 people some of whom played volleyball before hand. We enjoyed Bed-knobs and Broomsticks and the JHYG's ran the concession stand. Thanks to Tami Neiders and Brian Bond we enjoyed delicious popcorn. The movie was projected onto a t-shirt sheet stretched out between the Volleyball poles. Sean McCormick expertly managed the set up and with the Neiders' help, all was returned to normal afterward. Thanks and we'll see you again on August 11th for our next movie and camp out!!

*Katie McCormick*

# Youth

## Senior High Rafting Trip



Here's the latest list of those signed up to go on the rafting trip August 15th-17th. If you want to go please let me know by August 3rd. If you are on the list and you've changed your mind I need to hear from you: Taylor Mills, Kristen Petruzzelli, Danielle Petruzzelli, David Hoyt, Marc Bond, Jacqueline Rousseau, Sean McCormick, Karen Click, Caitlin McPherson, Faith Mills, Ryan Hall, Stephen McPherson, Ryan McPherson, Jessica Skowronski, Serena Desai.

Our drivers are: Bonnie McPherson, Cliff Click, Mr. Desai, and Katie McCormick

I'm sending out the forms to those on the list. These forms will also be on the church web page. Please return them as soon as you can along with your check.

*Katie McCormick*

## SHYGS Parents

There will be a parent meeting on Sunday, August 5th to discuss plans for the upcoming year as well as make up of the team who will be contributing to our high school program.

*Katie McCormick*



# 2007-2008 Sunday School Schedule

Sept. 16 - Regular Sunday  
Sept. 23 - Regular Sunday  
Sept. 30 - Regular Sunday  
Sat. Oct. 6 10:00AM blessing of the animals  
Oct. 7 - Regular Sunday  
Oct. 14 - Regular Sunday  
Oct. 21 - Regular Sunday  
Sat. Oct. 27 Halloween movie night  
Oct. 28 - Regular Sunday  
Nov. 4 - Regular Sunday  
Nov. 11 - Regular Sunday  
Nov. 18 - Regular Sunday  
Nov. 25 - Regular Sunday  
Dec. 2 - Advent wreath making  
Dec. 9 - Regular Sunday  
Dec. 16 - Instant Christmas Pageant  
Dec. 23 - No Sunday School  
*SJUSD winter break Dec. 24-Jan. 4*  
Dec. 30 - No Sunday School  
Jan. 6 - Regular Sunday  
Jan. 13 - Regular Sunday  
Jan. 20 - No Sunday school-(Jr. High ski trip)  
Jan. 27- Pass around the alleluia banner

Feb. 3 - Regular Sunday  
Tues. Feb. 5 - Shrove Tues. pancake dinner  
5:30-7:30PM  
Feb. 10 – bury the alleluia banner  
Feb. 17 - Regular Sunday  
Feb. 24 - Regular Sunday  
Mar. 2 - Regular Sunday  
Mar. 9 - Regular Sunday  
Mar. 16 **Palm Sunday** – stations of the cross  
for all classes  
*SJUSD winter break Mar. 24-28*  
Mar. 23 **Easter** - Dig up the Alleluia banner  
and Easter egg hunt  
March 30 - Regular Sunday  
April 6 - Regular Sunday  
April 13 - Regular Sunday  
April 20 - Regular Sunday  
April 27 - Regular Sunday  
May 4 - Regular Sunday  
May 11 - Receiving of the Scripture for 5<sup>th</sup>  
graders, Teacher recognition, and Mother's  
day