

The Shape

April 2008

The Episcopal Church in Almaden

6581 Camden Avenue, San José, California 95120 408•268•0243 www.eca-sj.org

*For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and
floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit
upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:
And they shall spring up as among the grass, as
willows by the water courses.*

Isaiah 44: 3 - 4

Opportunities at ECA

Worship

- April 6 – 7:30 AM Holy Eucharist
11:00 AM Holy Eucharist
April 13 – 7:30 AM Holy Eucharist
11:00 AM Holy Eucharist (Folk Sunday)
April 20 – 7:30 AM Holy Eucharist
11:00 AM Holy Eucharist
April 27 – 7:30 AM Holy Eucharist
11:00 AM Holy Eucharist

Adult Study

- Thursday Morning Bible Study at Church
10:30 AM April 3, 10, 17, 24
Wednesday Evening Bible Study
April 2 at Suzanne & Pete Mayo's
Potluck 6:30 PM, Bible Study 7:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study
April 16 at Betty & Dom Consorte's
Potluck 6:30 PM, Bible Study 7:30 PM
Wednesday Evening Bible Study
April 30 at Susanne & Arnold Moore's
Potluck 6:30 PM, Bible Study 7:30 PM

Children and Youth Study

- Sunday School hour at 10:10 AM
April 6, 13, 20, 27

Fellowship

- Chili Cookoff Fellowship Event – Friday, April 11 at 6:00 PM
JHYG (Junior High Youth) Meetings April 13, 27 6:00 PM
SHYG (Senior High Youth) Meetings TBA
Men's Breakfast Thursday Mornings 8:00 AM at Denny's

Almaden Adventures in the Arts

- Saturday, April 5 7:30 PM - Margaret Kvamme
Soup, Salad & Sound Organ Recital – Potluck begins 6:15 PM

- Saturday, April 26 7:30 PM - Marley's Ghost

Outreach

- Montgomery Meals – Friday April 4, 18

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN

SUNDAY SERVICES

7:30 AM and 11:00 AM

RECTOR

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

MINISTRIES

ACOLYTES	Taylor Mills & Marc Bond
ALTAR GUILD	Margaret Halliwell, Anna Spanjaart
COFFEE HOUR	Pete Mayo
FOLK CHOIR	Andy Kerr
GREETERS	Sharon Mills
GOD SQUAD	Stephen Mills
GOOD SAMs	Kelli Casale / Brenda McHenry
HANDBELL CHOIR	Maryke Williams
KIDS' BREAKOUT	Leslie Rousseau
LAY READERS	Jenny Hoyt
MONTGOMERY MEALS	Amy Griffith
NURSERY	Pauline Gilligan
PRAYER VINE	Dorothy Willard
USHERS	Dave Byers
SR HIGH YOUTH GROUP	Katie Taplin
STEWARDSHIP	HANK DeVoss, George Romer
JR HIGH YOUTH GROUP	Katie Taplin
WORSHIP	Andy Kerr
WEBMASTER	Kim Petruzzelli
YOUTH SUNDAY	Jim McPherson, Bryan Bond

ECA STAFF

CHRISTIAN ED. DIRECTOR	Katie Taplin
MUSIC DIRECTOR, ORGANIST	John Leslie
TREASURER	Maryke Williams
YOUTH DIRECTOR	Katie Taplin
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	Dennis Elliott

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The Shape

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

From Stephen

So what happens if there is a part of the creed I don't understand, believe, or have my doubts about? Relax, you are in good company. One of the two greatest Christian theologians of all time, Saint Augustine wrote fifteen volumes on the Trinity. He ends the final volume with a prayer and in which he expresses his seeming inability to explain in understandable form, the mystery of the Trinity. Because the creeds themselves attempt to describe the ineffable mystery which is the person of God, they are bound to be inexact, and subject to doubt and even disbelief. Thankfully the Episcopal Church has never required complete uniformity of belief. That is the Episcopal Church has always recognized that it is not the one true church exclusively, but is a branch of Christ's Church worldwide and that Christ's Church comes in many different flavors and forms. The Episcopal Church has also recognized that reasonable minds may differ on matters of faith and belief even when those minds have devoted themselves to prayer and study. We have never conceived of Christian theology as a monolithic set of properties and propositions but more like a broad river within which there are currents, cross-currents and eddies. This is not to say, that anything goes in terms of Christian theology. Every river and stream has its' banks and must stay within those banks, lest it become a flood. I believe that the creeds, at least in part, form the banks which contain that river. They are the yardstick by which Christian theology is to be measured.

It is also a mistake to assume that Christian theology is established and fixed for all time. Peter Gomes, a Baptist minister and a chaplain at Harvard University, has written a book about the bible entitled *The Good Book*. He makes a compelling argument that in the last century and a half the bible has been used to legitimize human slavery, justify prohibition, encourage anti-Semitism, and

sanction the subjugation of women to second class status. He then goes on to say that the debate over homosexuality that we are engaged in today is the next threshold over which Christian theology is stepping. Regardless of whether you agree with this final conclusion, there is no doubt that things we once justified using the bible are no longer justifiable, and that Christian theology changes over time and always has.

Coincidentally, in the February issue of *Episcopal Life*, there is an article by Tom Woodward, the retired rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Salinas about the Nicene Creed. Tom has, on occasion told the congregation that he was going to read through the Nicene Creed line by line and has told them "When the phrase is something you understand at one level or another, and believe, stand up or remain standing. When the phrase is something that makes no sense to you, or is something you do not believe, sit down or remain sitting." Tom says the resulting dance appears to be something akin to a "rebellious exercise class" with people popping up and sitting down at every phrase. Tom says the result is almost always the same: No one stands all the way through the creed and no one sits all the way through. The upshot is, however, that there was always at least one person standing for every phrase. The conclusion Tom draws is that the creed belongs to the church as a whole and even though each individual might not believe every phrase of the creed, the creed is what the church as a whole believes, and that each one of us makes up for the others deficiencies.

Whether you agree with Tom or not, it is an interesting theory.

*Salaam,
Stephen +*

From the Editor



What is it to be Christian and spread the word of God? The new testament tells us we are to go out into the world and proclaim the faith (in a nutshell) so why is it that many of us, especially we Episcopalians seem to avoid doing so? I have no answers here, no insight, just a ponder if you will.

This past month has been very busy for me, my traveling schedule for Coit has gone from the doldrums to gale force and this has caused me to really notice the difference between our offices in the west and our offices in the south. As political correctness has a deep foundation in California it should be no real surprise that the office I work in has really no sign of what faith the workers are. Come to think of it, none of the companies I have worked for have had a terribly religious work environment. Not that there is a policy against such things, but it seems that it is polite in modern culture to not discuss one's faith in order to not offend others. So how does one evangelize without offense?

I spent almost a week in our Houston office last week, and I was kind of "wierded out" by the office because everyone has a picture of Jesus, or psalms, or some new testament quote, or some of those ever so popular biblical themed chain letters posted all over their office or cubicle. In the public areas there were also little religious nick-nacks posted on the bulletin board. Somehow, and I don't know how or why, but the overtness of their faith made me feel uncomfortable. Which really struck me seeing as I'm a Christian myself.

Many modern Christians struggle with evangelizing to other faiths, it is as if the un-churched of any kind are the fair game and its dirty pool to try and convert someone on "the opposite team." This is a double edged coin as there is always some other religious group trying to convert us. Can we honestly gain offense when a Muslim talks of his faith, when we do the same to them? The rationale is always: of course *we* can because *we* are *right*. Ponder.

As I sat in my hotel room after the second day I was forced to question why I said to myself "there's too much God in this building." Can there ever be too much God in our lives? Why should he not be at work? Could we honestly expect Jesus to go to work every day dressed like anyone else engaged in the rat race, carrying a briefcase and neatly leaving the fact that he's the son of God in the lobby?

In the end I decided to myself: what I consider overt displays of religion are really a cultural thing, and what else can be said about it? I doubt that those that proudly display their faith seek to make others uncomfortable, despite the end result. By the same token, I doubt that those of us who are more private in our faith lack the drive to bring others into the fold. The thing that we ought to ponder is: what if there was that one person who is seeking faith and we could be the person to bring them to God? What if our perceived stiffness, reservations and politeness prevents us from helping someone? These are the great mysteries of our modern non-sectarian society.

Alex Dykes

From the Senior Warden

Sunday attendance has been a discussion topic that has come up the last few years during my time serving on your vestry. It has been discussed on retreat, at a number of our meetings and in a variety of ministry groups within our church. Mostly, we have questions.

Why do some people make it a priority to attend a worship service on Sunday no matter how busy or hectic their family lives are? Why do some people link their attendance and involvement with “personnel” as opposed to the Lord, Jesus Christ? Why do some people look at church on Sunday as an “in and out in an hour obligation” as opposed to an opportunity to take some time to reflect and open themselves to the Holy Spirit? Why do some people find comfort and contentment in the structure of the Episcopal service and others struggle to find meaning in it?

Then we ask, what are people hungry for today in light of what our communities and our world is like in 2008? What are you hungry for in your own life and in the lives of those around you? What does ECA have to offer that can satisfy that hunger? What might we have to do or change in order to truly begin to satisfy this hunger?

Many of you reading this participate actively in our Sunday worship experience at ECA. For that we are grateful and appreciative. You may be in the choir, ushers, greeters, acolytes, and the list goes on. To you we ask, what is the driving force behind your service? How are you fed, as you serve?

Your vestry welcomes your insight and your thoughts to our questions as we move forward this year. Please feel free to contact any one of us with your reflections, your desires, and your hopes for our parish. Truly partner with us to make ECA the best it can be to meet your needs and the needs of those yet to walk through our doors.

Susie Ferguson
Senior Warden



Cursillo 2008

Calling All Cursillistas

ECA is having a preparation party for the Cursillo weekend. If you've already attended Cursillo, please join us at the church on Sunday, April 13 at 12:30 pm (or whenever the coffee hour ends following the Folk Service). We'll be doing some cutting, stapling and other creative stuff. If you're really organized and want to bring a snack to share or supplies for a project, I'm sure you'll make lots of friends. Otherwise just bring yourself, and we'll be happy to provide for you.

Kim Petruzzelli
(408) 268-1956

Cursillo Weekend May 1-4

Cursillo is a weekend retreat that allows you to explore your spiritual gifts and grow closer to Christ. The weekend is hosted by volunteers from churches throughout the south bay area. We hold our weekends at La Selva Beach (near Monterey).

When someone attends their first Cursillo they go as a candidate and return as a Cursillista. You're only a candidate once but you can return as a volunteer many times afterward. Each candidate is assigned a sponsor. The sponsor is someone who has already attended Cursillo, and volunteers to drive the candidate to and from the retreat in May. Some sponsors also water plants, feed pets and take care of the candidates' children during the weekend.

This year ECA has approximately 35 church members participating as candidates, sponsors or volunteers. There are still a few spots open for candidates and sponsors. If you're interested in participating, please ask Father Stephen for an application.

Kim Petruzzelli



A Vision of Wonder

As part of Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves' declared Year of Wonder for our Diocese, the Santa Clara Valley Deanery at its meeting on March 8 voted to focus its energies on a single project which would combine a number of hopes for our deanery arising from the Visioning Day led by the Bishop in January.

The members present voted to take our proposal to our congregations and ask for their support in this effort. We hope to present this proposal to the Vestry at its April meeting. In next month's Shape we will give everyone information about this proposal.

Additionally, the world Mission Network in the Diocese of El Camino Real will hold a discernment day at St. George's in Salinas on April 19. The leadership of this effort is hoping for members from each congregation to attend this gathering and exchange ideas regarding world missions.

For further information on either of these activities, please contact either of us by phone or email.

Betty Wood
Jdougwood55@yahoo.com
(408) 997-3573

Mary Leal
Mlealo@aol.com
(408) 268-0230

Gifts of Gratitude

For George and Nancy Romer's ministry helping hurricane victims in Mississippi

All the helping hands and time spent with Marion during her convalescence, especially Betty & Dom Consorte for opening their house to her

Kim Petruzzelli for the marvelous job she does on the Website

Thanks to Pete Mayo, Bob Green, the ECA altar guild and all others who were so prompt to cover the altar and organ with tarps during our nasty winter wind and rain storms, when there was leaking in the sanctuary

Thanks to the following Palm Sunday & Easter musicians: Sandy Baldwin, Deb, Alex and Josh Bemis, Melanie Click, Kevin Haley, Rae Harris, David & Elizabeth Hoyt, Patty Johnson, Kathleen Quint, Dave Sanders, the JV Bell Choir

Thanks to Andy Kerr and the ECA Folk musicians for always straightening up the choir loft each Folk Sunday, and for putting away all the music stands

John Leslie and all our Choirs: Thank you for the inspirational music during Holy Week (Maundy Thursday, in particular) and Easter Sunday. Your voices, your instruments, your bells lifted our hearts and filled us with joy.

Sunrise Service Musicians: Thank you for awakening our spirits early Easter morn.

The Sound of Music

As you know by now, the JV summer musical committee has chosen “The Sound of Music” as our show for the Summer of 2008. Since then, the committee has met and set dates for some of the preliminary steps necessary to the production.

It was the decision of the committee that the part of Maria should be pre-cast, as it must be filled by someone who can really carry the show. The part was offered to Gwen Hacker and graciously accepted by her.

You know, then, that it is in excellent hands.

With this exception, there will be auditions for all the speaking parts. This musical differs from those that we have done in the past in that there is a specific number of parts for children. Therefore, the children who are interested will need to audition also.

It is possible that some or all of the children’s parts will be double cast in order to use as many of those who audition as possible.

In order to facilitate the process, audition workshops will be held for both children and adults interested in trying out for a role. These workshops will be held on Sunday, April 6 at 3:00pm for children and at 4:00pm for adults.

The purpose of these workshops will be to present the actors with materials for their auditions and generally explain the audition process. There may also be a viewing of a DVD of an actual staged production of the show, since many of us are most familiar with the movie version.

Coming to the workshop doesn’t obligate anyone to actually audition, but in order to audition it will

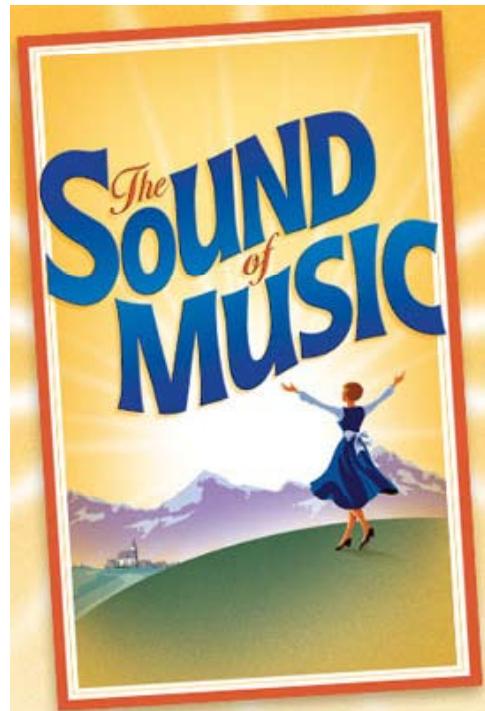
be important to attend the workshops.

On Sunday, April 20, at 2:00pm for children and 4:00pm for adults, the actual auditions will be held, and judged by an audition panel made up of those members of the committee who are not auditioning themselves.

These musicals have always been an adventure, a growth experience, and much fun for those of us who have participated in the past. Please join us if you are interested.

For further information please contact John Leslie at music@jointventurechurches.org or phone him at the church. Alternatively, contact Mary Leal at mlealo@aol.com or by phone at (408) 268-0230.

Performance Schedule:
July 25, 26, 27, Aug. 1, 2 at 7pm



21 and Counting

Life is so rich, so wonderful, with so very many layers. My emotions are mixed as my oldest son turns 21. I still remember vividly, as if I could reach out my hand and touch the day he was born, his baptism, his first word, first step, first day at school. And now, suddenly, he is 6'1" (or 6'3" if you count his hair) and according to the world, grown up!

Ever since my young man was a tiny boy he has loved trains, so our family decided to celebrate his shiny new adulthood with a train trip to Sacramento. Amtrak runs a double decker up twice a day, so we all trooped down to the San Jose Cahill station, a gorgeously renovated jewel box with Art Deco brass doors polished to a soft gleam. Inside all is creamy stone, restored WPA murals and a vaulted ceiling with beautiful geometric designs painted on the wooden rafters. Light pours in through high arched windows and best of all in younger brother's opinion, birds fly indoors past our heads while we wait for the train on carved wooden benches. He played the universal kid's game of running at pigeons to make them fly, of course, then we four tunneled through the underground passages to our train platform and snagged seats on the upper level.

The train pulled out of the station and that hypnotic train motion began rocking us like babies in a cradle. It felt like we were in a time bubble as the train carried us away from our ordinary lives. The view was extraordinary and ever changing, the beauty of God's creation layered with the works of man. Under limitless blue California skies, we passed through factories and junkyards, suburban backyards and trailer parks, graffiti from terrible to fabulous, inner cities and tiny Victorian-era towns. We caught glimpses of homeless camps and oil refineries cheek by jowl to lush wetlands with el-

egant egrets and ducks by the dozen, tumbledown fishing shacks and salt harvesting ponds beside the bay. Our iron steed carried us through forests and fields, past horses and cows and one glorious almond orchard in full bloom with the yellow lace of wild mustard around each tree.

And then, inexorably, our train pulled into the Sacramento station and our lovely journey came to an end, just as his childhood has ended and his journey toward adulthood has begun. With a prayer for God's grace that his journey will be a safe one, I watch a young man I am just beginning to know turn and offer his arm to his mother as they exit the train.

Laura Appleton



Reach

*Reach Up and grow closer to Christ
Reach In and grow a stronger faith community
Reach together at Adult Bible Study this month*

Juggling the demands of raising a family with two teenagers, one a special needs child, at the same time running my own small business, I found my world shrinking and shrinking while my responsibilities grew and grew. Meeting the needs of my family and keeping my clients happy meant something had to give....and it was me.

All moms give up huge chunks of themselves to take care of their families, and are glad to do it. Having a special needs child ups the ante to a ridiculous degree. Bottom line, it was way past time to restore balance in my life. A gracefully outstretched hand of friendship opened the path back to a spiritual life for me and by extension, my family.

My dear friend, Susie, tricked me, actually, into my first “supper with the rector.” I felt shy when I walked in the door, but the hosting family’s welcome was so warm, and the conversation over dinner so full of laughter and wit, the food was so satisfying, I felt like a hole in my heart had mended.

Each host family sharing their home, a small group of Christians sharing food and fellowship, sharing faith, stories of joys and sorrows, make you part of a chain that goes back to the first group of believers who broke bread together, prayed and studied together. How I love being part of this group!

Laura Appleton

Rector’s Bible Study

The Rector’s Bible Study on Wednesday evenings is offered the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Wednesday evenings of the month. The evening begins with a potluck supper at 6:30 PM for those who want to start with dinner. The Bible Study begins at 7:30 PM and goes until 9 PM. Every one is welcome and encouraged to join the group whenever and as often as they are able. We are currently studying the lectionary readings for the upcoming Sunday. Come and grow with us in fellowship and spirit. We usually meet in someone’s home for our time of fellowship and study.

Wed. April 2 we meet at Suzanne and Peter Mayo’s, 1117 Alston Way.

Wed. April 16 we will be with Betty and Dom Consorte, 6611 Bubblingwell Place.

Wed. April 30 we meet at Susanne and Arnold Moore’s, 107 Wollin Way in Los Gatos.

Thursday mornings...Are you a morning person? If so, you may want to try our weekday Bible Study. Whether you are an old pro, or a novice who’s never done it before, you are invited to study the Bible with an informal, lay-led group. The only requirement is a willingness to engage in reflection on the Bible’s meaning for our lives today. This group meets each Thursday morning beginning at 10:30 am at the church. Everyone is welcome. Come when you can.

The class is studying the Book of John this year. You can print out a syllabus for each class to use for your study. Go to eca-sj.org and choose the link education and then adult.

April 3 – John 17

April 10 – John 18:1-18

April 17 – John 18:19-19:15

April 24 – John 19:16-42

April Reflections

Some of you might know that I wear glasses – I am nearsighted. I can read a book, or look at a computer screen without problems. But I can't read a traffic sign or watch a movie without putting my glasses on. My glasses help me put the larger world into focus. In fact, as I have gotten older, I depend on my glasses to give me perspective, to catch connections that otherwise, I might have missed. My glasses are like my faith in Christ. My faith brings the events around me into focus and gives shape to my perspectives. And as we move into the season of Easter, I am reminded how important my spiritual glasses can be.

During the Easter season, we have several stories of how Jesus manifested himself to the disciples. We meet Jesus in the locked room; we meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus. How often do we find that God has figured out our deepest fears and anxieties and meets us in our hiding places? How often does God meet us wherever we are?

Those of us who are called Christians, who have identified with Jesus' life, death and resurrection, are called to live a life that is somehow different. This life is to be transformed and lived NOW. Jesus did not tell his disciples to wait until they died to live a new life. Peter and the Apostles went out after seeing the Risen Christ and began to transform the world around them. Seeing Jesus, encountering the Risen Christ, changed them.

We do not have that ability to see Jesus like the disciples did. Yet when I hear the gospel stories again it seems that God has cleared my eyesight, or given me a new set of glasses. When I wear my glasses, the world does not change. Street litter doesn't disappear, people are still rude, inconsiderate, or just self-absorbed, I still need to get up in the morning, get to work, try to do my best at whatever I do. Yet

my faith in the Risen Christ, in God's ability to help me transform the world around me gives me a new perspective. Here and there, I see glimpses of God's Kingdom coming together. Little by little, transformed people, living changed lives, help to embody the risen Christ to those who need to hear the gospel.

Sometimes living the gospel is providing a hot meal, a word of prayer, a presence in a time of transition or grief, companionship along the path that we travel together. These are not just tasks for ordained people, but jobs for all of us to do. Together we can study the word of God, together we can listen to what new word God is speaking to this community, right here, right now. We can look around to see how Jesus is embodied in each other. We can eagerly search for how the Holy Spirit is breathing new life into tired lives.

And transformed people who are living changed lives can transform their church community. When I put on my spiritual glasses, and look with the eyes of faith, I see new life. I see a caring community who believes in each other and is seeking transformation, trying to live out the gospel. May we walk that path of transformation together.

Kimberly Axtell

Anniversaries

Steve & Joyce Wing	19
Todd & Kimberly Axtell	29
Bryan & Inge Bond	29
Karl and Jan English Lueck	30

Birthdays

Dennis Moran	3
Ryan Hall	4
Stephen Taylor	4
Hank Ciappa	7
Amanda Degnan	9
Steven McPherson	9
Sandie Mueller	9
Juliette Rousseau	9
Jim McPherson	10
Elizabeth Ward	10
Doug Dunham	11
Grace Yomtov	11
Gayle Byers	13
Sean McCormick	16
Matthew Degnan	20
Mariolien Ciappa	22
Laura Moore	22
Sandy Taylor	22
Tyler McPherson	25
Georgina Dunn	26
Caitlin McPherson	26



Fellowship

Our first fellowship event for this year is planned for Friday, April 11 at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall and will be an event for all ages. It's a Chili Cookoff and Game Evening. We are hoping for lots of entries of chili (bring enough for about 8 people) which everyone can taste and judge before we eat them all up for dinner along with cornbread and salad. Dessert will be a bakeoff for teens and kids to enter. There will be prizes and recognition for our winning entries and participants. For those who want to linger after dinner, there will be a variety of games and puzzles for all to join in and play.

Tim Miller