

The Shape

February 2009

The Episcopal Church in Almaden

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



Opportunities at ECA

Worship

- February 1 – The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany
7:30 & 11 AM Holy Eucharist
- February 8 – The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany
7:30 & 11 AM Holy Eucharist
- February 15 – The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany
7:30 & 11 AM Holy Eucharist – Folk Sunday
- February 22 – The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany
7:30 & 11 AM Holy Eucharist & Healing
- February 25 – Ash Wednesday
7:30 AM & 7:30 PM Ash Wednesday Liturgy

Adult Study

- Thursday Mornings at the church 10:30 AM to Noon
- February 5 – Hebrews 10:19 thru 10:39
- February 12 – Hebrews 11 part 1
- February 19 – Hebrews 11 part 2
- February 26 – Hebrews 12:1 thru 12:13
- Adult Education Class during the Sunday School Hour
February 1, 8, 15, & 22 with Dr. Matthew Whitlock
Religions of the Book: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Youth Study

- Sunday School begins at 10:10 AM February 1, 8, 15, & 22
Sunday the 22nd, the Alleluia Banner will pass thru all classes

Fellowship – Adults

- Women's Walk & Talk – Tuesdays at 8:45 AM, Rain or Shine
- Men's Breakfast, Thursday mornings, 8 AM at Denny's
- Fellowship Planning – Friday, February 13 (details within)
- Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner – February 24

Fellowship - Teens

- February 1 & 15 – Junior High Group Meeting at 6 PM
- February 8 & 22 – Senior High Group Meeting at 6 PM
- February 24th – Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner

Outreach

- Montgomery Meals – February 6 & 20

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	Marcus 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
HAND BELL CHOIR	Maryke Williams
KIDS' BREAKOUT	Leslie Rousseau
LAY READERS	Jenny Hoyt
MONTGOMERY MEALS	Amy Griffith
NURSERY	Dot Allfrey
PRAYER VINE	Ann Avoux
USHERS	Dave Byers
SR HIGH YOUTH GROUP	Jon Mills
STEWARDSHIP	HANK DeVoss, George Romer
JR HIGH YOUTH GROUP	Bonnie McPherson
WORSHIP	Andy Kerr
WEBMASTER	Kim Petruzzelli
YOUTH SUNDAY	Jim McPherson, Bryan Bond

ECA STAFF

CHRISTIAN ED. DIRECTOR	
MUSIC DIRECTOR, ORGANIST	D. Asa Stern
TREASURER	Bill LaVallee
YOUTH DIRECTOR	
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	Dennis Elliott

CONTACTING

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The Shape

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OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN ALMADEN

From Stephen



This month on Ash Wednesday (25th) we will begin the season of Lent. Lent is the 40 day period (excluding Sundays) before Easter. The name is derived from the old English “lechten” or lengthen meaning spring; a time in which the days lengthen. In the early church, it was a time when the candidates for baptism or catechumens were prepared for baptism on Easter eve through instruction, prayer, fasting, reading, and study. Lent is a direct descendant of the 40 day period Jesus spent in the wilderness following His baptism, but it also echoes earlier scripture as well. Moses spends 40 days on Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:18). Elijah spends 40 days walking to Mount Horeb (1 Kings 19:8.) God makes it rain for 40 days and 40 nights while Noah keeps the animals and his family safe in the ark (Genesis 7:4.) At God’s command, Jonah gives the city of Nineveh 40 days to repent (Jonah 3:4.) The Israelites wander in the wilderness for 40 years before they reach the Promised Land. Lent also was a time when notorious sinners were commanded to do penance before they could be restored to full fellowship within the body of Christ.

Traditionally, Lent is a time for a renewed emphasis on prayer (justice to God), fasting (justice to self) and almsgiving (justice to neighbors.) Fasting takes many forms. Sometimes it involves eating less or fewer meals in a day and sometimes it involves giving up certain foods (e.g. chocolate or alcohol) for the period of Lent. But does Lent have any significance modernly? I believe it does. Lent helps us to get in touch with the rhythm of life (and death.) We in California get so spoiled with our year-round good weather that we tend to forget that in other parts of the country and the world, there is a cycle

or rhythm to life. In the winter all lays fallow and virtually nothing grows. Life slows. It is only in the spring that new growth and new life appear. Lent reminds us that we too need to slow down and even perhaps allow certain aspects of our lives die in order for them to be resurrected.

Lent helps us get in touch with ourselves. The disciplines of Lent are not fun, nobody says “let me tell you about the wonderful fast I had the other day!” Yet we tend to take ourselves and our bodies for granted. One of the wonderful aspects of the incarnation is that Jesus was willing to take upon him all the not so fun parts of being human like hunger, thirst, aches, pains, suffering and even ultimately death itself. Those were certainly not fun for Jesus, but they tell us that when we speak to Jesus about those things Jesus knows of what we speak. Lent reminds us of what it means to be human.

Lent is a time for spiritual and emotional “spring cleaning.” Just as our houses and cars and offices and other places we inhabit become cluttered over time so too our spiritual and emotional lives become cluttered with spiritual and emotional “baggage.” Unresolved anger and grief poison our current relationships and prevent us from experiencing the full joy of the Lord. That is why in the Orthodox church Lent is referred to as the “Bright Sadness.” Lent gives us a time and an opportunity to focus on our unresolved issues, and to resolve what we can.

Finally, we do not undertake these disciplines without a goal or purpose. The reason we undertake them is so that when we hear the acclamation “Alleluia, Christ is Risen” every part of us may respond fully with “The Lord is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!” May you have a holy Lent.

Stephen Mills

From the Editor



“Part of life is living,” I recall often telling someone I was dating that very thing. Usually of course that was my backup plan

for rationalizing something I spent money on, or whenever I wanted to eat that extra slice of chocolate cake, or that cookie that was calling me. Now that I am older and am growing horizontally rather than vertically I think the phrase is just as valid, but in a different way.

What is it about us that makes a sense of humor so easy to lose? Why is laughter such a fleeting thing? Is it part of the human condition that some of us will just get bitter, grow old and die? As our search process draws neigh and Rob and I embark on life changes (sometimes I think the only constant *is* change) I have been struggling to keep my sense of humor.

I think the loss of humor starts at as soon as adulthood kicks in. You're always telling yourself not to laugh at something. We babysat for a friend's three year old the other day, Rob spent half the time admonishing me for laughing at the child's antics, and why not? It was funny! Sure that's bad parenting, but... *We* aren't the parents.

I recall when my brother and I were kids the odd things we used to pull. My mother used to love to sew, not a day went by that she wasn't working on some hobby or another and my fondest memories of childhood were when we finally got that second TV in the house. It was a 20" RCA TV and it was the first one in the house with a digital tuner and a remote control. No longer did you actually have to [gasp] get up to change the channel, now you could

stay in bed and change the channel. Accompanying the TV on a very 1960s one leg stand was our very first VHS recorder and an antenna rotor control, but I digress. Every evening when my dad was working late (which was often) after dinner we'd go upstairs and mom would sew while we lay on the bed and all watched Dr. Who together. My mom has this bad habit of putting pins in the bedspread of their water bed while she was sewing. *She* was always careful mind you to not puncture the bed, Ross and I? Not so much. One day for no apparent reason we did what kids do: entertain yourself with what surrounds you, so we pulled out the pins and made neat shapes, poked here, poked there, poked everywhere. (See where I'm going?). Well, bedtime rolls around and we scurry off to our rooms and all is well until about 2am when there are screams from our parents room. Apparently *somehow* the bed had sprung a leak. About 20 years later my mom was telling my Aunt that she should not buy a water bead because of the catastrophic leak they had one night, so which my brother and I started giggling like we were 5 again and said, "well, that was probably the pins we stuck in it." See? You have to maintain your sense of humor...

Now that Rob and I are on plan "B" having realized that we need to put our house building plans on hold for a while, we are searching for a *very* cheap house in downtown San Jose. As we come to the realization that our price range means more "fixer" than "upper" in our fixer-upper plans, you just have to laugh and carry on.

As we look at the future of ECA and try and find out where this road is leading us we need to remember our sense of humor for truly those who can laugh and be joyous are *living*.

Alex Dykes

Senior Warden

During our January vestry meeting, we welcomed into our community the Rev. Canon Brian Nordwick. He will be our liaison to the Diocese during our transition process.

For about an hour, Rev. Brian presented to us the big picture and set the table for discussions that the vestry will wrestle with in the next few months: how long a time frame to set for the interim process, how much money do we budget for an interim priest, search process and a new rector, how many people to choose for the search committee and how to get a cross-section of our community.

Beginning in February, your vestry will consider these issues and the many others related to the transition process. Rev. Brian has indicated that the Diocese will be available for whatever support and counsel we ask for. And when we have established our search committee, Rev. Brian will return for an in-depth presentation of the specifics of the search process. I am thankful to Bishop Mary that she has been able to continue to bring together our previously fractured diocese and give us a process that is both well thought-out and flexible enough to handle our individual needs.

I'm sure that flexibility will come in handy over the next year.

In the meantime, the work of our ECA community continues. Your vestry spent a wonderful weekend away at retreat. During that time, we worked to renew our teamwork and listening skills, we spent time reflecting on God's Word and in worship. And we prepared ourselves to renew the task of ministry.

Some members of the vestry have continued or renewed their ministry. Several new ideas and initiatives are already in place for this year. And the ministry of the whole community continues as well. Every week, faithful people plan our worship services, faithful youth leaders work to guide our youth, faithful people guide our finances, faithful people pray for one another, faithful people plan fun activities to be enjoyed by everyone, faithful people study the Word of God, faithful people reach out to one another – in community and outside our community, in love.

ECA is a wonderful place to live and grow as a community.

May God's grace and peace continue to be known to us in our faithfulness.

Kimberly Axtell
Senior Warden



Montgomery Meals

The Montgomery Meals Outreach program of ECA continues to provide meals every other Friday for the homeless served at the Montgomery Street Shelter in San Jose. Amy Griffith, Suzanne & Pete Mayo, direct and lead this worthwhile program. They are always happy for new people to join their ranks to prepare and cook or go to the shelter to serve. Maybe you would like to give this ministry effort a try sometime during the next year. Check your calendar and see how you could fit in with their schedule for 2009.

February 6 & 20
March 6 & 20
April 3 & 17
May 1, 15, & 29
June 12 & 26
July 10 & 24
August 7 & 21
September 4 & 18
October 2, 16, & 30
November 13



Take Heart Fellowship Planning

There is an ECA Fellowship Planning Potluck scheduled for Friday, February 13. Yes let's all Take Heart and have some family fun while we plan a calendar of fun events for our church. This is an inter-generational event. Babysitting/supervision will be provided at the church for very young children and of course, the youth center will be open. This will be a potluck event. You are encouraged to bring "heart healthy" food to share. Be sure to have the recipe handy for any requests that may come your way. During the evening we will put together our Fellowship Calendar for the year. Input from the fellowship surveys and additional information gathered before and during dinner will be valuable to set up our calendar. A sign-up poster can be found in Fellowship Hall.

Your Vestry

February Reflections

I'll admit, Monday is not my best day. I am often cranky and withdrawn, hoping that the day will disappear as quickly as my bad mood.

And why is that? Sundays are so relaxing. I get to sleep a few more hours; the tasks are fewer, and I often get a nap. Sunday worship revives my soul, allows me time to reflect on the last week, its successes and failures, and promises that I can do better. So if I have returned to some sense of wholeness on Sunday, why is Monday so hard?

The Sunday/Monday divide can be a strong one. Christianity through the years has struggled with this issue for most of its history. As early as 200 CE, there were people who chose to abandon their lives in the city and escape to another community to live lives of contemplation. These early Desert Fathers and Mothers wrote of the value of living life without daily distractions. They in turn were succeeded by the various monasteries and nunneries that arose around 1100 CE and continue to this day. Christianity has placed value of those people who cast aside the pleasures and responsibilities of the world in favor of God.

But this often sets up a false divide between the secular and the sacred. This is a strand of our heritage that wants to separate our lives into two halves: who we are on Sunday, and who we are the rest of the week. Sometimes this divide can be summed up as body (world) is bad, spirit is good. It places more value on our spirituality, what we do with our inward selves, and less value on what we do to earn a living, or interact with our family, or how we treat each other during the week. This divide makes it difficult to integrate our spiritual selves with our physical selves. And it also devalues the work of those of us who choose to stay in the daily grind and not escape the world.

I believe that the journey of transformation needs both body and spirit. The act of walking involves both the will to move and the body to make it happen. So too, the choice to minister involves both the decision to minister to another, and the body to turn the ear, reach out a hand, or walk forward in action. You cannot serve God without both your body and spirit. I act in faith and my spirit rejoices, and that gives me courage to take another step, and the Holy Spirit cheers me on.

I'll admit, I still need to work on my Monday attitude. It is hard to leave behind the expectations that my life would be a series of Sundays, one after another. Instead, I know that I need to walk forward into my Monday with a bold face, knowing that what I received from my church community has prepared me for the week. There are people who need a smile rather than a frown, which involves both my will to make it happen and the muscles of my face to pull in appropriate directions. Who knew that a smile can be a ministry?

Kimberly Axtell

Fellowship

Fellowship has been an important part of ECA's church family life ever since I can remember... and Jerry and I started coming to this church in March of 1981. For us without any real family in the area this church became our family. Our youngest, now 27, was born here and the "baby Jesus" when he was only 6 weeks old. Yes, we've been here a long time and have attended, organized, set up and cleaned up more activities and fellowship events than we could possibly count. The friendships we have made through those experiences are undeniably some of our strongest and long lasting friendships today and will continue for many years to come with God's blessings.

Fellowship supports and weaves all of our church life. It is part of worship. It is part of study. It is part of outreach. Just as your own family events and gatherings help keep your family connected and supporting one another, so, too, do the events and gatherings at ECA keep our church family connected and supporting one another. In the year ahead as we face numerous transitions and changes, staying connected and supporting one another will be even more vital. Fellowship will be one avenue at ECA to keep our family together, strong and growing.

Looking ahead in 2009, it is a hope to be more purposeful and balanced in our fellowship activities in number of ways, including: more regularly timed activities; a balance of family friendly and adult only activities; piggy-backing on other regular church events such as worship, and events that lend themselves to easily inviting neighbors and friends who might be seeking a church home. We are an intergenerational family and we hope to provide a variety of opportunities for all our ages.

It is my hope that if you have helped in fellowship planning and events in the past you will have the energy and desire to help us again. If you have not participated in the past I hope you will consider trying to be more involved in the coming year in some way. Maybe you can introduce some new ideas for us to try that might suit your style and interests. All in all it is my hope that we will grow and thrive as a church family getting to know each other better as we share in the fellowship of being part of ECA.

Let's begin together at the Take Heart Fellowship Planning Evening on February 13. You will find the details elsewhere in this Shape.

Susie Ferguson
Fellowship Ministry



Stewardship

First, my thanks to those who have already taken time to submit their 2009 pledges. Rest assured that timely receipt of your pledges is a necessary resource in Vestry guidance for the “business” aspects of ECA’s overall programs of worship. Reviewing 2008, the 69 pledges, augmented by plate offerings and gifts collectively yielded \$187,982. This is 1.4% under the initially pledged \$190,600, the prime input into budget planning for the past year. All things considered, 2008 finances worked out well. As of January 13, only 58 pledges have been received, down 11 from last year. The total amount pledged for 2009 stands at \$161,046. That too is commensurately less than last years total. We expect that more pledges will be received as year end financial records and projec-

tions are bring finalized. Be reminded that we continue to strive for 100% pledge participation no matter the amount. The first step is always among the most significant steps toward a goal even if it is a small one. So, if you have yet to determine your treasure pledge participation for 2009, following your earnest thoughts and prayers, take that first step to pledge in accord with your conscience and capability to support the worship of God through your church, it’s visions and missions.

Hank DeVoss
Stewardship



Shrove Tuesday Supper

Save the Date! The Shrove Tuesday pancake supper starts at 6pm on February the 24th. There will be plenty of pancakes, bacon, sausage and everything else that's delicious! Come support the youth groups and get yourself ready for Lent.

Tuesday February 24th

6PM-8PM

Fellowship Hall

Be there!



Gifts of Gratitude

Thanks to Joy and Beth for leading our January Chick Flick event

Thanks to the ECA worship committee: Jenny Hoyt, Margaret Halliwell, Ana Spanjaart, Leslie Rousseau, Pete Mayo, Sharon Mills, Pauline Gilligan, Dave Buyers, Asa Stern and Andy Kerr for their faithful service to ECA. We appreciate their willingness to give of their time and talents to help make our worship service so wonderful.

Thanks Betty Consorte for the beautiful Christmas decorations in the sanctuary. (And for making sure they are not still up!)

Birthdays

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

Thank You

Dear friends and extended church family,

Your kindness and caring have played such a big part in lifting our spirits and touching our hearts. Thank you for all the love you have shown in so many ways during Dorothy's illness, and my recuperation after shoulder surgery. Your cards and phone calls reached out to us when we were in need with understanding and encouragement. At this time, Dorothy and I would like to express what a wonderful blessing you all have been and how truly fortunate we both are in having you in our lives. The warmest of thank-yous!

Warren & Dorothy Willard

Anniversaries

Len & Jackie Whitlock	3
Jon & Sharon Mills	11
Tim & Donna Miller	19

ECA Fellowship Survey – Let us know your favorites if you haven't already.

Your name _____

Age ____ (only if under 18)

As we move forward to plan fellowship activities for the coming year we would like to know about your favorites. Every one is encouraged to complete a list for us or get help completing a list. No one is too young or too old to be included.

Circle the event ideas that you would most enjoy attending. Add to the end any new ideas or forgotten ideas that you think might be lots of fun to do.

Intergenerational Events

Hiking (in San Jose or Point Lobos or other area)

Movie Nights (inside winter or outside summer)

Game Nights Camping (at church or somewhere else) Pumpkin Carving Road Rally Craft Fairs

Holiday Parties (Christmas) Ice Cream Socials BBQs

Family Fun Days (Bounce House or Climbing Wall)

Advent Fair Scavenger Hunts

Please offer us your own suggestions and ideas:

Adult Only Events

BBQs Holiday Parties (Christmas) Theme Dinners Lobster Dinner

Bridge Ladies Luncheons Steak & Stein (Men) Chili Cook-off Coffee House Idea

Dinners in the Hat Adventures in the Arts Theater events Line Dancing

Tennis Social Contests Retreats

Tours (please offer suggestions)

Please offer us your own suggestions and ideas:

Please complete this survey and return to Susie Ferguson, ECA's Vestry Fellowship Chair. You may put it in her mail box at church, turn it into the collection plate during a Sunday Service, or email your responses to susie@universallisting.net if possible before our **Fellowship Planning Potluck** entitled, **Take Heart** on Friday, February 13th at 6 PM. Look for the sign up poster in Fellowship Hall.