



The Shape

Newsletter of The Episcopal Church in Almaden

Rector

When my daughter Frances was still an infant, a friend with teenaged kids reflected that she had noticed a pattern to her children's development. Her daughter and son had always had periods of frustration just before they broke through into a new skill or stage, such as just before they crawled or stood for the first time. She would wonder why they were so cranky and irritable, and then one day, they would take the leap – and then they'd be thrilled and happy. It has been a useful piece of advice as I watch my own children grow.

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Service Schedule

SUNDAY SERVICES

7:30 am and 10:30 am
Summer Schedule Starts June 19

THURSDAY SERVICE

7:30 am

Rector

The Reverend Katharine Flexer

(408) 364-6524

Staff

Melanie Weiner

Youth & Christian Education

D. Asa Stern

Music Director & Organist

Bill LaVallee

Treasurer

Dennis Elliott

Administrative Assistant

Assisting in our Ministry

Doug Dunham

Senior Warden (408) 398-7911

Alex Dykes

Junior Warden (408) 839-2632

William Bond & Inge Bond

Acolytes

Anna Spanjaart

Altar Guild

Kathy Mastre

Coffee Hour

Sharon Mills

Greeters

Betty Consorte

Worship

Jenny Hoyt

Lay Readers

Ann Avoux

Prayer Vine

Dave Byers

Ushers

Jon Mills

Senior High Youth Group

Bonnie McPherson

Junior High Youth Group

Todd Lukanc & George Romer

Stewardship

Worship Schedule

Jun 2 - Ascension Day

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist

Jun 5 - 7 Easter

7:30 & 11 AM Holy Eucharist - Last choir Sunday

Jun 9 - Feast of St. Columba, trans.

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist

Jun 12 - Feast of Pentecost

7:30 Holy Eucharist & 10 AM Joint Venture Service (Folk Music)

Jun 16 - Feast of George Berkeley & Joseph Butler, trans.

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Prayer

Jun 19 - Trinity Sunday

7:30 & 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist - Summer schedule begins

Jun 23 - Nativity of St. John the Baptist

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Prayer

Jun 26 - 2nd Sunday after Pentecost

7:30 & 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist

Jun 30 - Feast of St. Peter & St. Paul, trans.

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist

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Rector

[Continued from cover]

And it's a useful image for more than children! I wrote in last month's *Shape* about the difficulties of settling in and my impatience with the process. Several of you told me that after reading my article, you were worried I wasn't happy. Well, I suppose I wasn't terrifically so, when I wrote the piece – but immediately afterward, things suddenly (clunk!) started falling into place. We had a glorious time away in Yosemite, reconnecting with the wild God of the Sierras I had missed so much in New York, and with good friends in the area here. We got the phone call inviting us to enroll Benjamin at the coveted preschool. We got our tax refunds. I had my hair cut. And one day I executed a particularly tricky bit of route-finding around Good Samaritan hospital without consulting the map.

What I should have also described in last month's article are all the wonderful things we are enjoying about living here. I get to go running regularly on trails flanked by sage and poppies. We buy fresh eggs from the chicken man up the hill, and we are getting the tastiest vegetables ever from our CSA farm in Watsonville. Frances loves her school and they love her there. Frances also loves this church and her Sunday School experience, and can tell me the stories of what she is studying in a vivid way. All of you have welcomed her and Benji here so warmly. I have experienced wonderful hospitality in so many homes and had such positive feedback from so many of you. And I can sense all of us getting into step together, finding the dance and enjoying the music. I'm excited to be here.

Sometimes naming our blessings comes easily; sometimes we have to practice it. But whether it comes naturally to us or not, it is labor worth doing. It's easy to rehearse the litany of what is going wrong, but the more we focus on that, the further

we mire ourselves in all that is negative. Norman Vincent Peale had a point: if you think about positive things, you feel happier. It can sound simplistic, but there's a basic truth to it. That's why Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order, required his monks to follow one spiritual practice in particular: the examen of conscience. At noon and at the end of each day, Ignatius said, we should stop and prayerfully reflect on the events of the day. What can we be thankful for? And what do we need to pray for more help in? His idea was that the more regularly we practice this kind of attention to our day, the more we learn to recognize God's presence in every moment of our lives. And the more we do that, the more we realize how many blessings we are surrounded by, even in times that seem dark or frustrating.

So I'm practicing that again. I invite you to do that with me. What blessings do you see in our common life together at ECA? Where do we need God's extra help? Let's share those with each other, in conversation and in prayer. And as we practice this together, I thank you for your patience with me. I get cranky sometimes before I realize a new blessing.

Kate



Pentecost Prayer

Exuberant Spirit of God,
bursting with the brightness of flame
into the coldness of our lives
to warm us with a passion for justice and beauty
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
sweeping us out of the dusty corners of our apathy
to breathe vitality into our struggles for change,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
speaking words that leap over barriers of mistrust
to convey messages of truth and new understanding,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
flame
wind
speech,
burn, breathe, speak in us;
fill your world with justice and with joy.

- Jan Berry



Congrats Grads

Brennan Hall, graduating from Archbishop Mitty High School. Brennan will be attending Loyola Marymount University in the fall.

Stephen McPherson, graduating from St. John's Military School. Stephen will be attending Loyola Marymount as well!

Brooke Mills, graduating from Leland High School. Brooke will be attending Colorado State University in the fall.

Our blessings and prayers go with you! We're proud of you!



VBS

Save the date. Our Joint Venture Vacation Bible School is scheduled for July 25-29. This is for children ages 4 through entering 5th grade. We learn about our faith through games, stories, art, and more. It's tons of fun! More information to follow on the website, in the Shape, and in the weekly bulletin – keep an eye out for it!

June Fellowship

Sun, June 12th - Joint Venture Service with a Bar-B-Que following the service.

Sun, June 19th - Father's Day - Refreshments will be served after each service.

Thurs, June 15 - The Joint Venture Book Group will be reading *Cutting for Stone* by Abraham Verghese at Suzanne Mayo's. All are welcome!

Dates to put on the calendar:

Sat, July 16th - Entertainment with John Leslie

Thurs, July 20th - Book Group - Joan Wagner

Sat, August 27 - Wine & Swine dinner

Where Have All The Flowers Gone?

You've probably noticed that we've taken the flowers off the altar. Why? Aesthetically speaking, with the candles, altar book, and Eucharistic elements all in place, it was pretty cluttered having the flowers there. But even more important, it detracted from the focus on the bread and wine, the centerpiece of our worship together. So we're looking for a place that is aesthetically pleasing and keeps the flowers 'in their place' - i.e. a place where they can be seen, where they ornament the church, and where they help give the greater glory to God. We'll be trying out various locations and flower stands over the summer months – be patient and generous with the process, and we'll find the right spot. Talk to Kate or to Betty Consorte, vestry liaison for worship, if you have questions.

From the Editor



How does the Shape happen? This past month there have been some questions about exactly how The Shape takes shape, how it gets edited, printed, etc. For anyone who wonders how these

things work, here's how it happens:

every month a series of volunteers, the vestry, wardens and rector write an article and submit it via e-mail to TheShape@eca-sj.org by the 15th of the month. Inge Bond checks the e-mail account on a regular basis delivering me a collected group of articles by the 17th of the month.

Once I receive the content for The Shape, I get working on the layout and graphics. This is about the time that I start pestering anyone that should have an article to me but hasn't yet. By the 23rd to 24th I have a preliminary version of The Shape to Kate and Inge for any corrections and last minute additions. Barring any major issues, we have the corrected version to Kimberly Axtel on the 25th or 26th for printing.

Kimberly and Todd very graciously print and fold The Shape at their own expense. As our office staff hours have been reduced and the office is closed on Monday, depending when The Shape is printed and delivered the Shape is generally mailed on or around the 30th of the month. Depending on how long it takes our local postal employees to sort and deliver our mailing, you should receive your copy in your postbox during the first week of the month.

Alex Dykes

Our first foray into animal husbandry is now finally underway. While we had originally intended to start with sheep, after much thought and budget analysis we decided to get chickens first and re-group on the shepherd concept next year. The real problem is that sheep eat grass and right now our pasture has two large redwood trees sprawled horizontally on the ground and is full of hemlock. Trying to be a good shepherd before we even have a flock, we decided it would be best to rid ourselves of the tasty and poisonous flora before we get some fuzzy fauna.

Not coming from an agricultural background, I have trusted my research skills that I use daily to point me in the right direction. The first thing I discovered when ordering chicks was that they ship them in the mail, in a box, 27 at a time. The novelty of the postman delivering chicks to an office building in Burlingame was only secondary to my own internal doubts about raising poultry. The funny thing is, raising animals for the food they produce has been with us for centuries and nothing I am doing is novel in any real way at all.

For some reason I cannot yet understand, I find some sort of simple joy in the time-consuming but simple tasks of "farming". Most people I encounter, including our rural next-door-neighbours, are horrified that we are doing our own fencing, pasture maintenance, cobbling together our own chicken coop and cleaning out the chicken run without paid help. There is something so grounding in these simple tasks it makes me feel closet to creation, and perhaps that is the inexpressible draw to the land.

Alex Dykes

Good Question!

Have you ever wondered what the “rules” are for the Eucharist (e.g. who gets served first? What happens to a wafer that is dropped on the ground? What’s special about the water in the pitcher?)? Or why we sing the hymns we do on the days we do? Got another burning question about church? Well, here’s your chance.

Starting with the July edition of *The Shape*, we will introduce a column called *That’s a Good Question* – this will be an opportunity for parishioners to submit questions, with answers provided by Kate, your editor, or other members of the vestry/subject experts.

Submit your Good Question to: theshape@eca-sj.org and look for the answer in an upcoming issue of *The Shape*!

CSA

Ah, summertime... time for sunshine, lazy days, and great tomatoes. Interested in farm-fresh, organic fruits and vegetables? Have we got a deal for you!

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a wonderful way of supporting our local farms and benefiting mightily with great produce in return. You buy a membership for a season or part of a season, and each week, you pick up your share of the farm’s produce, picked that week and delivered to a location near you. One such farm, High Ground Organics in Watsonville, offers a CSA with multiple pick-up locations near us. But we can get one even nearer, right here at ECA, with only ten sign-ups! The price is reasonable and the vegetables are outstanding. There’s still time to sign up for the 2011 season, with 9-week memberships available through November. In 2012 if we have enough interest, we can have a pick-up site here at church. Go to www.highgroundorganics.com for information, and talk to Kate if you’re interested in more!

Gifts of Gratitude

Special thanks to the following people for their service to the congregation recently:

- Ellen Lukanc, Nancy Romer, Anne Tysanner, and Suzanne Mayo for their help in reorganizing Pastoral Care.
- All who served as hosts/hostesses for portrait sessions.
- Todd and Kimberly Axtel for ECA postcards and photo directory artwork.

•Rob McClaine and Alex Dykes for putting up blinds in the rectory’s master bedroom.

•Bonnie McPherson for always helping clean up in the kitchen after fellowship affairs

•Virginia Jones for her job as the Vestry secretary—not an easy one

If you know someone that you feel should be acknowledged, send his/her name to Mike Schmidt (mschmidt8120@sbcglobal.net), along with a brief explanation, and we’ll ensure that it appears in the next *Shape*.

Vestry Updates

This is the first appearance of a monthly column intended to give readers a brief report from each of the vestry ministries – if you want more detail or have questions, please read the monthly minutes (posted on the vestry bulletin board), or ask your friendly local vestry member!

Stewardship Message:

It occurred to me after providing the ChristiaNet perspective on Stewardship last month that the highest aspiration of Christian Stewardship is to take care of the our fellow parishioner's well-being in body, mind, and spirit, in whatever priority need presents at that time. This is the first mission of Pastoral Care, Worship, Fellowship, Outreach, Inreach, Youth & Adult Education, Spiritual Growth, Joint Venture, and Communication. As

was drummed into us at GE during my many years there, if you find yourself not doing our primary mission, stop doing whatever you are doing and re-focus.

I recently attended a Diocesan seminar led by Diana Butler Bass during which she conclusively pointed out why churches are in decline across the world and pointed a way toward a very hopeful new vision. I choose to interpret her message in terms of Stewardship (see above). We are on our way! Be encouraged; see what we are all doing! We are not dogma-based; we believe because we experience God's love in our daily lives and service to ourselves and the community around us. We are led by the need to intentionally practice good works because it is goal-driven. And, because of that, we have a common relational community which is strengthening as we go through this cycle of good Stewardship, over and over. We encourage one another and celebrate our successes. We praise God for the opportunities He gives us to serve others as good stewards of the skills and talents He has bestowed on us.

On a humorous note, someone quipped that "going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car." You've got to get involved on the mission! It is a journey. Cars don't go anywhere in the garage! So, as we go forward guided by our mission, let us think of what we're going to do next, rather than what we've done. Be challenged. What are YOU going to do next, in this wondrous community we call ECA?

Finance Message:

Our Endowment Fund improved to \$245,118, up \$11,588 from two months ago. Our operating

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- **Worship Matrix**
- **Midweek Bulletin**
- **Sunday Bulletin**
- **Past Shape Issues**
- **Calendar**

Vestry Updates

accounts at Wells Fargo and Merrill Lynch stand at \$33,817 (i.e. “money in the bank”). Our total revenues (income) to 5/5 are at \$67,763 while our total expenses to 5/5 are \$81,344 which amounts to an operating deficit of \$13,581. Our year to 5/5 budget shows a deficit of \$1,736. So, if you haven’t sent in your pledge payment or haven’t pledged, please do so. Remember that to do our mission, we need the resources, people power and funds.

George Romer

Communications:

The ECA photo directory is well under way, with 83 families/individuals having had their portraits taken so far. The team is working on layout and will soon be coming to you to double-check your directory listing.

A Communications Steering Committee has been established to manage this growing ministry.

The Website design group is hard at work creating a new look for the ECA website.

Once the directory project is complete, the ECA Member Photo Board in the hallway will be updated.

George Romer, Inge Bond

Worship:

Worship Ministry includes Acolytes, Altar Guild, Folk Sunday, Greeters, Lay Readers, Music and Eucharistic & Healing Lay Ministers. Should you have any questions, comments, ideas or wish to participate in any of these Ministries please feel free to contact me, Betty Consorte, at: domcon7@AOL.com or phone me at (408) 268-7768, I am your representative on your Vestry.

Betty Consorte

Youth and Christian Education:

Melanie Weiner will be leaving her position as Christian Ed Director and Youth Coordinator in August so she can pursue her Seminary goals. The Christian Education and Youth Committee have been planning the transition and the job description for this position over the last 2 months, and have put out a request for resumes as of Friday the 6th of May. The closing date for the position is June 1st, so that the committee can review the resumes, make phone interviews, and select someone by the first week or so of July—if all goes well.

VBS is the final week of July—and will be overseen by Melanie and her group of helpers. If interested in helping out with any aspect of VBS, please contact Melanie Weiner.

The youth groups have their end of the year party coming up in the second week of June, and then we convert over to our summer schedule of weekly BBQs and volleyball/hanging out/camping/beach trips.

Bonnie McPherson

Fellowship:

Fellowship activities in May included the Mother’s Day dessert, a trip to Symphony Silicon Valley, and the Pulp Fashion exhibit at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. Everyone is always welcome at fellowship events so remember to bring a friend!!

Amy Griffith

Pastoral Care:

The other day, as I was driving through my neighborhood association on my way home, I had to wait for a neighbor, who had gotten out of his car and appeared to be “shooing” something out of the way so he could move his car into a park-

Vestry Updates

ing space. It turned out to be a young crow, which must have fallen out of its nest. About half the size of an adult, short-feathered, and somewhat clumsy as it hopped around on two legs as if on a pogo stick, it apparently couldn't get back up into the nest. Poor thing, I thought to myself. How will it survive without food or protection?

The next day I noticed my two cats gazing intently through our large back windows at the patio, making clicking noises with their teeth, which I have learned means that they were watching a bird and saying something that can be roughly translated, "Let me at it!" Sure enough, the young crow was still around and had apparently gotten under the fence and into our back patio. It tried to fly up to the top of the 3-foot fence, but it couldn't even come close. I locked our cat door on the other side of the house (I don't want it to be the Schmidts' cats that do in the little guy), and I slipped out into the patio to open the gate and let the crow out into the common area. But as soon as I appeared outdoors, two adult crows swooped down to the lowest branches of the nearby sycamore trees and began cawing to beat the band. Every time I moved closer to the young crow, they increased their chatter and danced around. I feared being dive-bombed, warily opening the gate and retreating back inside the house. My cats could see the adult crows and didn't look quite so eager to venture out.

I have no doubt that the adults are providing food, as well as round-the-clock protection, and that the little crow is in pretty good hands. I know there are probably challenges yet to be faced, but it seems like they are absolutely devoted to shepherding their youngster through this crisis until he can take care of himself. Even my two bird hunters would be reluctant to challenge those double-teaming, in-

your-face parents. I've fallen out of the nest before. Have you? One day I was doing, relating, working, going about my life. The next thing I knew I was in a hospital bed, helpless, my life on hold. And then it got worse! Family and friends got Marianne and me through it, sustaining us until I was back to at least a semblance of normalcy. Such healing takes time. These kinds of things —medical issues, the death of a loved one, will happen to all of us in our turn; no one gets to say, "Pass."

In last month's Shape, in his Stewardship article, George Romer wrote about our need to prepare for emergencies, particularly natural disasters-disaster plans and emergency kits. It's part of being responsible stewards. We at ECA need to be prepared as well for when one of us falls out of the nest. We need to be prepared to provide immediate and effective support. Please consider signing up to provide meals, rides, or help out as needed in the event of a memorial service, or perform simple home repair. Send me an email (mschmidt8120@sbcglobal.net) or give me a call (408) 323-8025. You may never be called—that would be a good thing—but we need to be prepared nonetheless.

Mike Schmidt

**Joint Pentecost
Service & BBQ
Sunday June 12th
10 AM Service**

Meditations from our Midst

This is the first in a series of monthly columns written by members of the ECA vestry to share their thoughts on their faith, on God, on ECA – whatever they are moved to share.

Thoughts from Amy

Being part of ECA for 40 years - there must be something here that keeps me coming to church as many Sundays as I can. It could be the caring people that are part of ECA. It could be the fellowship activities that are fun and bring people together. It could be helping those less fortunate through Montgomery Meals. It could be the Joint Venture concept and knowing the special people of AVUCC. I think all of these keep me here along with the spirit of God in our presence and the faith that He is guiding us in our lives. Our church is a special place to worship.

Amy Griffith

Wine & Swine

ECA's first annual "Wine & Swine" will happen on Saturday, August 27th at 6:00PM, as a prelude to the upcoming "Steak & Stein" in September. While the exact menu has yet to be decided, you can be sure there will be a luau-pig and party favours with a swine theme. Fear not, poi is not on our menu, so pop this date on your calendar, invite your friends, neighbours and distant relations. Everyone knows the more the merrier. If you'd like to help, contact Alex Dykes at (408) 839-2632.

Anniversaries

Terry & Mel Stonehocker	10
Robin & Maryke Williams	12
Ted & Lynda Fahlen	14
Ed & Sandie Mueller	14
Russ & Kim Petruzzelli	15
Roland & Betty Darnell	17
Ron Howie & Melinda Jennings	19
Jeff & Linda Nolette	21
Andy & Francie Kerr	22
Jim & Bonnie McPherson	22
Roger & Jenny Hoyt	24

Birthdays

Alex Bishop	3
Evelyn Wing	3
Mike Reilly	6
Rosario Cassetta	8
Jenny Hoyt	8
George Romer	9
Charlotte Boileau	10
Fabrice Akue	11
Tyler Nolette	17
Winnie Jackman	18
Gregory Lukanc	23
Margaret Halliwell	25

Ann's Award-Winning Chili

After the ECA Chili Cookoff in March, we promised to publish the winning recipe – here it is!

Ann's Award-Winning Chili

From Ann Mayers, her variation of a recipe in *Cover and Bake* by the editors of *Cook's Illustrated*.

8 ounces bacon, chopped into 1/4" squares

Vegetable oil

4 pounds chuck roast (trim fat and gristle from 5-5

1/2 pound roast to make 4 pounds), cut into 1/2" cubes

1 medium onion, chopped medium

3 cans (4 oz. each) chopped jalapeño chiles

5 medium garlic cloves, minced

3 tablespoons chili powder

2 tablespoons ground cumin

1 can (28 oz) crushed tomatoes

2 canned chipotle chiles (small ones—they're potent!) in adobo sauce, minced to a paste

2 teaspoons sugar

6 fresh 6-inch corn tortillas, torn in 2-inch pieces

2 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken broth

Lime juice

1. Cook bacon in 12-inch skillet until brown and crisp. Remove bacon; drain on paper towels, and transfer to slow cooker. Save bacon fat; if necessary, add vegetable oil to make a total of 2 tablespoons.

2. Dry the beef with paper towels. Season with pepper. Heat skillet over medium-high heat, and add 2 teaspoons bacon fat. Distribute half of the

meat in skillet and cook, without stirring, until well browned. Stir the meat and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until completely browned and liquid is almost gone; place in slow cooker. Repeat with remaining meat.

3. Heat skillet over medium heat, and add 2 teaspoons bacon fat. Add the onion, jalapeños, garlic, chili powder, and cumin; cook, stirring occasionally until the onion is lightly browned. Stir in the tomatoes, chipotles, and sugar; turn heat to high and bring to a boil. Add to slow cooker.

4. Combine the tortillas and 1 cup of chicken broth; heat in microwave until mushy, 1-3 minutes. Pour mixture into food processor or blender, and process until smooth. Add to slow cooker.

5. Add the remaining 1 1/2 cups of chicken broth to slow cooker. Stir until all ingredients are well mixed.

6. Cover the slow cooker and cook until meat is tender, 9-10 hours on low or 6-7 hours on high.

7. Before serving, stir in the lime juice (to taste).