

The Shape

Newsletter of The Episcopal Church in Almaden

From the Rector

Last month we spent a week of our time away at Family Camp, an Episcopal camp of the Diocese of California held at the Bishop's Ranch in Healdsburg. We had been looking forward to the week all year. Over the year since the last camp Jim and I had agreed to step into leadership, so of course the 2012 camp was much on our mind for several months. But for Frances as well, only four at her first camp and now five for her second year of it, expectation and excitement was intense.

[Continued on page 3]

Service Schedule

SUNDAY SERVICES

7:30 AM

10:30 AM

THURSDAY SERVICE

7:30 AM

Worship Schedule

Rector

The Reverend Katharine Flexer

(408) 364-6524

Staff

Susie Ferguson

Youth & Christian Education

Kristal Kim

Music Director & Organist

Bill LaVallee

Treasurer

Dennis Elliott

Administrative Assistant

Assisting in our Ministry

George Romer

Senior Warden

Steve Wing

Junior Warden

William Bond & Inge Bond

Acolytes

Bobbi Finley

Altar Guild

Kathy Mastre

Coffee Hour

Sharon Mills

Greeters

Jenny Hoyt

Lay Readers

Ann Avoux

Prayer Vine

Dave Byers

Ushers

Bonnie McPherson

Junior High Youth Group

Inge Bond

Senior High Youth Group

Andy Kerr

Stewardship

Alex L. Dykes

Editor

Jill Hertzner

Copy Editor

Aug 2 - Samuel Ferguson

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist

Aug 5 - Proper 13

7:30 & 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist

Aug 9 - Herman of Alaska

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Prayer

Aug 12 - Proper 14

7:30 & 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist - Folk Sunday

Aug 16 - St. Mary the Virgin, trans.

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist

Aug 19 - Proper 15

7:30 & 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist - Healing Sunday

Aug 23 - Martin de Porres, Rosa de Lima, Toribio de Mogrovejo

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist

Aug 26 - Proper 16

7:30 & 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist

Aug 30 - Charles Chapman Grafton

7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist

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E-MAIL ADDRESS Theshape@eca-sj.org

From the Rector

[Continued from cover]

So it was no small thing for her and for us when she woke up with a fever in the wee hours of Sunday morning, the day we were to leave for the camp. All that night and into the next day, we debated and deliberated about whether we could go as planned or whether we had to postpone our arrival a few days. Finally we decided just to go, dragging our ailing child along with us – and indeed, with extra rest along the way, Frances was up and able to participate in activities by Tuesday. After clinging to us unhappily throughout her sickness, she was thrilled to run off and join her friends in the freedom and big-kid attention of the camp. And we were glad to let her. Until Thursday evening came, the day of the campfire.

That evening we put Benji to bed, who was too young to stay up for the late night event. I debated briefly whether to join some women in a different activity (hours in a sweat lodge), but Jim and Frances and I had worked on a song we wanted to lead and I felt a tug to be with Frances at the campfire instead. We led our song (“Looking for Dracula”) and then Jim went back up to the ranch house to finish writing a piece for chapel the next day. Frances and I stayed on, singing the songs. Marshmallows were brought out, and Frances joined the throng of kids by the fire pit to roast her marshmallows and make her s’more. I waited till the crush died down and then roasted my own, squishing the white goo into the graham cracker and chocolate. I got one bite. Because just then, Frances, eager to get near her big-kid friend Evie, jumped up from her spot, tripped over the rocks at the edge of the fire pit, and fell headlong into the fire.

Thank God she stretched her hands out to catch herself, and fell to the side, not the center of the fire. A teenager grabbed her as she struggled to get up, screaming. We dragged her to the hose, where

we sprayed her down to put out any lingering sparks. By then Jim had got to us, hearing her cries, and we rushed Frances up to the ranch house and then into a car to the hospital in Healdsburg. She was hysterical with the pain, but the news was better than we feared: second-degree burns on both hands, no damage to her mobility, likely to heal within weeks. We came back late to the ranch with our drugged-up, bandaged child, to find people waiting up for us and watching over Benji. They had done a lot of praying while we were gone.

The next morning, we came into breakfast late. Gently and lovingly, people made their way over to us, to Frances first, and then to us. Two of Frances’ friends immediately sat on either side of her and fed her breakfast (they continued to feed her for every meal until we left). Later that day, when the kids all decorated their bikes with streamers in a farewell parade for the retiring directors, they twined crepe paper around Frances’ bandages and led her along, beaming and smiling like nothing had happened. She even got to perform the role of the harp in her skit at the talent show that night, and one girl said admiringly, ‘Your costume looks even better with those bandages!’

Parenting, I have been told so many times, is all about letting go. It’s about allowing your child to grow into their own self, guiding them and giving them the support and care that will let them be the best of who God created them to be. The bitter part is that it’s also about allowing them to hurt and suffer, sometimes intensely so. I will never blot out the picture of Frances falling into that fire pit. We wanted her to be part of things with her friends, especially after her first few days being ill at camp – but were we too careless? Should I have hovered nearer to her at that fire pit? I’ll never know for sure.

Senior Warden

In mid-August, your Vestry is working in retreat on realizing the ECA Vision. The Vision was created with your input from the workshop sessions by your Search Committee almost two years ago. The Vision called for certain qualities of service to be in place by 2015. Very briefly we are to have in place:

1. A variety of worship opportunities.
2. Collaborative leadership between the rector and the laity.
3. A variety of music for worship and community arts.
4. A comprehensive, dynamic youth program.

Rector

[Continued from previous page]

But watching the other children rally around Frances and care for her the next day – and certainly, feeling for ourselves the love and support of all the other parents at the camp – gave a different answer. Here was Frances, her own person: on the other side of a painful experience, to be sure, but more importantly, on the receiving end of love and cheer from others who cared for her – for *herself*, not as our child or any child, but for her own self. It was a glimpse for me of heaven, of the beloved community, of what it is like for God to love us. Each of us is known; each of us is loved. Our suffering and our joy and every part of our lives are taken up and shared and made holy. We are never alone.

As this summer draws to a close, as school starts again and travels end, I pray that we all might know this love. And share it, in this community and with everyone in our lives.

Kate Flexer

5. Pastoral care to members in need and the community.
6. Caring outreach opportunities and community classes.
7. A variety of educational programs to engage children, youth, and adults.
8. Strong support for our Joint Venture.
9. Celebrations through joyous fellowship.

But, without program goals and commitments, they are just a view of what could be. We have come a long way in the last year and a half. We intend to assess our progress and brainstorm what we dare to dream going forward. We would like to be better at making the Vision come true with clarity. To that end, we are meeting to flesh-out the Vision with goals and actions. Once we have these adjusted or re-affirmed, our Stewardship Program will ask for your commitment to make them happen.

As a start, we ask for your prayers during August for our efforts.

*George Romer
Senior Warden*

From the Editor



Despite having served my sentence term to completion on the JV board and the Vestry (and therefore theoretically reclaimed several days a month for other tasks), I still find myself too busy. I ask myself when (if ever) I'll be able to have something approaching a "life of leisure." I would like to say that the lofty goal would be to spend time praying, but sometimes I'd just love a nap.

If I'm not at work, I'm busy writing for my "other master." If I'm not doing either of those things I'm tending to our 110 chickens, cleaning the septic filters, checking on the water filtration system, or digging the basement. Is this how one is meant to spend their 30s?

The things that separate us from creation don't have to be as obvious as daily chores however. When was the last time you went somewhere that few people have been? Someone where that your mobile phone doesn't work? Somewhere you were able to just stop and wonder? Somewhere to think and breathe without worrying about your schedule?

As I look back on my childhood, and compare it to some of the kids in the youth group, I ask myself if the constant pressure on our daily lives has improved anything. I realise that I lived in a bubble growing up. It was however a pleasant bubble to be in. Somehow in the '80s we never encountered drugs or gangs, never spent every waking moment in some sort of school sport, activity, project or class. I remember that after school my brother and I would spend hours and hours trying to build the perfect wagon to race down the hill (we discovered brakes were important after passing a moving car

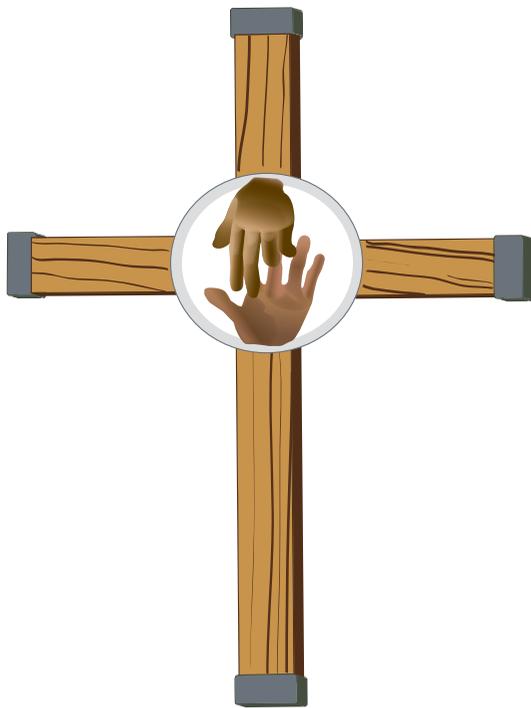
going in the same direction, being unable to make a corner, hitting a kerb and crash landing into a freshly plowed field). When the wagon ceased to interest us, there were lizards to catch, worms to dig up, bikes to ride, and cows to tip. (Sorry Ms Cow, I feel bad about that now.)

Why is it that everyone I speak to waxes poetic about "simpler times" but places their own kids in some sort of young-adult-sized busy-box? Does God fit in there with all the other things crammed inside? Why is it that we value our (in comparison) less complicated, more relaxed upbringing, yet we demand that our children involve themselves in absolutely everything?

The answer is simple. It's the example we provide. When was the last time you took a vacation? (By vacation I mean at least three consecutive weeks off work.) When was the last time you took a vacation *and* didn't deal with work while you were off? I don't know about you, but my employer manages to find me wherever in the world I may be. Why do we find this sort of "inability to unplug" acceptable? It is no wonder we think our kids need to be involved in everything to "keep them out of trouble" when we do the same. Aside from the fact that a little bit of trouble builds character (ask me how I know), it leaves them precious little time to commune with creation and our creator.

Taking my own medicine, I have decided I shall reserve one day a week to lie on my hammock with a book in one hand, an glass of iced tea in the other and gaze into the forest and the ocean beyond. I encourage you to not only do the same, but teach those you love the value of "down time" as well.

Alex Dykes



Pastoral Care

If you or anyone you know is in need of assistance, please give one of our willing volunteers below a call!

Meals

Anne Tysanner
artysanner@yahoo.com
(408) 927-7140

Rides

Gayle Byers
dng_byers@sbcglobal.net
(408) 268-0448

Small Repairs

Allan Jones
adjones9966@yahoo.com
(408) 268-3322

Prayer Vine

Ann Avoux
annavoux@gmail.com
(408)270-2406

Card Ministry

Margaret Halliwell
(408) 267-5229

Receptions

Marianne Schmidt
mschmidt8120@sbcglobal.net
(408) 323-8025

We're on the Web!

<http://www.eca-sj.org>



- **Worship Matrix**
- **Bulletins**
- **Past Shape Issues**
- **Church Calendar**
- **Recorded Sermons**
- **Upcoming Events**

JV Updates

As noted last month, JV recently received a letter from our insurance company stating that our roof needs to be evaluated and certified for insurance purposes. The minor repairs and resurfacing work began on July 17th, so the re-certification of our roof warranty for another 10 years is now a done deal. Cross another big project off our lengthy list.

Work is now underway on the old fellowship hall area as the youth center is being moved into the Sunday school room in the far northeast corner of the building. Susie, in conjunction with Bonnie and Inge, has some great plans for upgrading the whole space. More to come on this in the near future.

Steve Wing



ECA Website

Have you visited ECA's website lately? I hope so. I hope you find it increasingly helpful in terms of keeping up-to-date in terms of what is happening at ECA. The website committee has been meeting and strategizing in our attempt to make the website a useful tool for everyone. Hans Spanjaart did most of the work of creating the current website. Mary McPherson is trying to get up to speed, so that Hans doesn't bear the whole burden. Jason Kazarian and Alexanna Alvarado have also recently become involved.

There is an Event Schedule on the home page of ECA's website. I've begun trying to update that schedule (calendar), so that it can become a reliable source concerning everything that's going on at ECA. It will take me a little while to track down all events and get completely up to speed, so please be patient. I haven't begun to focus on August and subsequent months yet, so there are events coming up that aren't posted yet. But I will get there. You can help by sending me an email regarding events you don't find listed on the schedule.

Mike Schmidt

Neighborhood Watch

Rey Cedeno of the San Jose Police Crime Prevention Unit gave a fantastic two hour presentation on July 18th on how to help protect our homes and neighborhoods. There were about 100 people, if not more, in attendance at this meeting which was chock full of facts, helpful safety tips, and believe it or not, some laughter. We learned how to identify suspicious activity, what crimes the police will respond to, and how our efforts in reporting details of the people involved in the activity can help the police to catch the suspects.

Some people who attended were recently robbed or physically assaulted (and a friend of one stabbed, and recovering) and they shared a bit of their stories. Although we certainly cannot prevent such occurrences from happening at all, we can take steps to protect our home and personal property.

Here are a few tips we were given:

- Replace 3/4" long screws with 2 1/2 to 3" screws in the strike plate of your doors
- Do NOT list your vacation dates on Facebook (or similar programs)
- Engrave your driver's license number on TVs, DVD players, stereos, radios, sporting goods, tools, musical instruments, and bicycles. You can borrow an engraver from any City of San Jose Library (this technique has led thieves to be caught!)
- Do not leave anything showing in your car when you lock it up. Thieves see it as an opportunity to break in. There may be nothing in that bag, but they don't know there is no lap top in there!
- Stay on the phone until the 311 or 911 operator tells us to hang up. Again, the more play-by-play details we can provide, the more it helps the police catch the bad guys!

- Check out the Crime Prevention website at www.sjpd.org. If you want to check on the activities in a particular area, such as your neighborhood, click on the "My Neighborhood Update" link, go to the bottom to accept the terms, then enter your address (or an intersection) at the top. The call reports for activities that have occurred from last week up to the last 12 months will appear, but you can change the time frame by selecting dates on the bottom of the screen.
- Dispute Resolution Services (408) 792-2327

Most of the households who attended received a Neighborhood Watch sign to put up in their window at home as Officer Cedeno actually ran out of them at the meeting! When I left for Big Basin the Monday before the meeting, I left him a voice mail that I had 36 people confirmed, but 100 people ended up showing up! Hurray! As of this writing, additional signs are on their way for delivery. There were advertisements for this event that did not mention to RSVP, so happily, the word got out! Thank you to all those who helped spread the information for this event! I hope you enjoyed it and got as much information as I did!

My sincere gratitude to Betty and Dom Consorte who helped to set up the tables and chairs, brought food and drinks, set up the screen for the presentation, and of course the dreaded clean up and finally the lock up. I have a new appreciation for all of you who have planned and set up meetings in the past. It certainly goes to show what a blessing it is to be part of a supportive community!

Wendy Martin
Welcoming and Growth

Youth Groups

The youth have earned a more relaxed calendar and are in summer mode. What this means is that the kids are getting together on Sunday evenings for a BBQ and games. So far, badminton and some board games have been the ticket, but who knows what future Sundays will bring? The food and frolic begins at 5:30PM and goes to about 8PM.

We will also be having some "fun" getting the youth center revamped for the coming year: the current activities are getting the old shelving units out, and then doing whatever painting needs to be done. If you are a youth or an incoming youth (entering 6th grade), come join us one of these Sundays through the middle of August. We'd love to have you!

Bonnie and Inge

Anniversaries

Jack & Winnie Jackman 20

Birthdays

Joy Austin-Lane	6
Bethany Nollette	11
P.J. Gallego	13
Ashley Martin	13
Jessica Skowronski	14
Roger Hoyt	16
David Byers	17
Gwen Hacker	17
David Hoyt	19
Allan Jones	24
Frances Sandrock	30
Lynne Kelly	31



Outreach Updates

ECA's Outreach Programs seem to be moving along nicely. Debbie Estill has taken charge of the Santa Maria Back Pack Program and has been collecting supplies and checks. This collection will continue through mid-August. Should you have any interest in participating in any of our Outreach Programs please contact me.

Betty Consorte

Fellowship Events

August 3rd

Trip to the Jelly Belly Factory and Blackhawk Plaza and Car Muesum. Sign up on the ECA bulletin board.

August 12th

Barbecue after the 10:30 AM service.

August 15th

The book group will meet at the home of Suzanne Mayo at 7:30PM. The book is *Wicked Autumn* by Maillet. Please RSVP to Joan Wagner.

August 25th

Steak & Stein, please sign up on the ECA bulletin board soon!



Unbroken

Recently, I read a book entitled *Unbroken*. It is the story of Louie Zamperini. If you've never heard of him, here are some highlights. He was a hell-raiser child, he was a long distance medal winner in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin (and actually shook Hitler's hand), he joined the army, became a bombardier in WWII, survived his plane being shot down in the Pacific, spent 47 days surviving in a life raft on the open ocean, got captured by the Japanese, and spent countless days being tortured in a POW camp. When he comes home after the war, he is, not surprisingly, a "broken" man. Tormented nightly by the horrific flashbacks to the war, he overly indulges in the numbing effects of alcohol. Needless to say, it is not a book for the faint-hearted.

The most powerful part of the book came at the end in a few short paragraphs. Louie's wife badgers him to attend a speech with her given by Billy Graham. When he finally relents, his life changes. Louie's perspective does a 180. As he takes in what Billy Graham says, suddenly he is overtaken by the belief that God's divine love had intervened to save him over and over again in the war. There was no other explanation.

Two weeks ago, John and I were in Seattle. It was an anniversary of sorts. Twenty-five years ago this month, I was in Seattle receiving a bone marrow transplant. Though the war I fought with cancer was miniscule compared to Louie's, I felt camaraderie with Louie when I looked back on how God intervened on my behalf throughout the experience.

Have you ever taken the time to look back at your darkest days and ponder God's presence with you during them? Maybe you should do it now and tell Him how grateful you are.

Mary McPherson

Pass The Plate

Two rules Bishop Greg Rickel of Olympia follows: Never celebrate a Eucharist without an offering, and never let the offering plate pass without putting something in it.

Oh great, you're thinking. Here goes the church, drumming us for money yet again. Why do we pass the plate in church? Certainly the church needs your gifts and donations to operate. Just like NPR on a pledge drive, we need funds from members and guests in order to keep running the church and doing our mission and ministry. Nothing but your gifts supports that work – there's no centralized fund that pays for ECA to exist.

But why do we ask for money in the middle of worship? For centuries the offertory has been a time for the gathering of alms, money brought to help the church serve poor and needy. The old custom was for people to come forward to the altar, each with their offerings; sometime around the beginnings of our Anglican Church (noted in the 1552 BCP, for example), 'churchwardens' were directed to go out and gather the offerings from the people to put in the 'poor men's box.' In some Protestant churches later, passing the plate was

discouraged in order to avoid the temptation of showing one's piety before others – financial support of the church was done in less visible ways instead. And once churches became self-supporting, gathering pledges of giving from members became a way of planning the yearly budget.

The Episcopal Church maintains both streams of the tradition. We do depend on pledges in order to effectively plan for our ministries. But we also pass the plate during the Eucharist. As we bring the bread and wine to the altar, so too we bring money, the most tangible symbol we have of our labor and sweat. When we offer these gifts at the altar, we are offering our whole lives to God, giving thanks for them and asking God to take them and bless them and make them fruitful. Putting money in the plate is a physical act that accompanies the spiritual response of thanksgiving, and in that sense is a sacramental act.

It's a potent symbol. We hold onto our money pretty tightly – but our theology reminds us that it's not our money at all, just as our lives are not ours. So besides giving our monthly pledge, I am challenging myself to have money on hand to put in the plate at each Eucharist – no small thing, as

I have to remember to put money in my alb pocket when I vest. I invite you to consider doing the same: pledge a faithful percentage of your income, but also offer what you can in the plate when you come to worship. And so remind yourself to offer your whole self, without reserve, to God.

Kate Flexer



Christian Education

We are making some changes as we go into our fall program for Sunday School. First, we have chosen a different curriculum for the coming year, “Grow, Proclaim, Serve.” We needed to address, “What are our children were learning?” There was concern that though the curriculum we were using seemed engaging for students and teachers, it did not provide a solid foundation of the Bible stories and personalities that help children in their faith walk and formation.

To start the process I began by looking at a wide variety of curricula. I found various aspects of each one suitable, but nothing seemed “perfect” for us. The one that has been selected does best to accommodate our unique situation of a “one room school house” and does follow our church year with special lessons for our major feasts and festivals. I hope to supplement this curriculum with some of the aspects of our “learning center approach” that we did like and were engaging for our students. This particular curriculum, with its three year cycle, provides an opportunity to go to an age-based classroom situation as we grow and still stay on the same learning cycle.

This curriculum does provide a lesson plan and plenty of resources for our teachers to do each Sunday. I will be holding a training session for our teachers in August sometime before we begin Sunday School on September 9th. I hope to have a minimum of 6 teaching teams and

maybe even eight (two teachers working together constitute a team.) This will mean that teachers will be teaching only six or even four times during the year. If you would consider being on one of our teaching teams this year please call me. I will gladly give you all the help you need to be successful.

Besides organizing for the new school year, summer has been busy getting our Sunday School and Youth areas set to go for Fall. Many hands can make “light work,” so if you can, call me, and see how you can help us look our best when we start our fall activities.

Susie Ferguson



S U M M E R 2 0 1 2

Rooaah!

S p i r i t - F i l l e d C o n v e r s a t i o n

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What is Rooaah?

Rooaah is a phonetic spelling of the Hebrew word for breath, wind, or spirit, *ruach*. And, Rooaah is a relaxed conversation about the Big Questions that challenge believers and seekers alike—*What's the difference between spirituality and religion?*

What role does/should faith play in politics? Why is there suffering? Is God really listening? Is Heaven really for real? Is Hell? How can we reconcile science and religion?

A Rooaah gathering is meant to give breath to your questions in a community of fellow travelers, companions on the road to wherever our faith takes us next!

Experiencing God's Presence

August 15, 7:00 PM

Location: UnWined

6946 Almaden Expressway

From ancient times, believers and seekers alike have had profound experiences of God's presence. Sometimes this has been in particular places or through particular spiritual practices. Sometimes it's been as if out of nowhere, for no immediately apparent reasons. People have called these experiences "mystical," "spiritual," "unitive," or just plain "mysterious." Whatever they might be, however they might come about, at our next *Rooaah*, we discuss our own experiences of divine presence, how it occurs, and what it means to our spiritual lives and our participation in communities of worship and service.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Drescher at elizabeth.drescher@att.net.

Avon Walk

Congratulations to Sharon and Taylor Mills who completed the Avon Walk for Breast Cancer on July 7th and 8th! Together with nearly 2,200 other walkers, Sharon and Taylor walked over 39 miles from San Francisco to Corte Medera and back to help raise money and awareness for the Avon foundation. The even raised 4.8 million dollars for the foundation's crusade. The Avon foundation helps support local research programmes as well as clinics for the medically "underserved" in the community. Thanks to everyone who helped Sharon and Taylor train for their walk as well as those who donated to the cause.



Steak + Stein = Fun



*Join us on Saturday, August 25th
at 6PM for ECA's annual Steak
and Stein. Be sure to check out
the ECA bulletin board for more
details and, as always, sign up in
advance!*

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The Shape

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