



The Shape

Newsletter of The Episcopal Church in Almaden

From the Rector

October, for me, begins with the Feast of St Francis on October 4, a day to honor the beloved patron saint of San Francisco. At ECA, as at other churches, we hold an annual blessing of animals around Francis' feast day, praying over our pets and furry companions as we remember Francis' own love for and honoring of God's creatures. But that is only a part of Francis' legacy.

Before his conversion, Francis was the son of a rich merchant – a wealthy, purposeless young playboy. He joined the military seeking glory, but was stricken with a serious illness. During his illness, Francis learned to pray, and began a relationship with God

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Service Schedule

SUNDAY SERVICES

7:30 AM

10:30 AM

THURSDAY SERVICE

7:30 AM

Rector

The Reverend Katharine Flexer

(408) 364-6524

Staff

Susie Ferguson

Youth & Christian Education

Kristal Kim

Music Director & Organist

Bill LaVallee

Treasurer

Assisting in our Ministry

George Romer

Senior Warden

Bryan Bond

Junior Warden

William Bond

Acolyte Master

Bobbi Finley

Altar Guild

Kathy Mastre

Coffee Hosts

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

Folk Music Director

Alex L. Dykes

Shape Editor

Mary McPherson

Bible Study

Kathleen Eagan

Senior Ministry

Worship Schedule

- Oct 3** **St Francis, trans.**
7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist
- Oct 6** **Proper 22**
7:30 AM Holy Eucharist
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist
12:30 PM Blessing of the animals
- Oct 10** **Vita Dutton Scudder**
7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist
- Oct 13** **Proper 23**
7:30 AM Holy Eucharist
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist - Folk Sunday
- Oct 17** **Ignatius**
7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist
- Oct 20** **Proper 24**
7:30 AM Holy Eucharist
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist - Healing Sunday
- Oct 24** **St James of Jerusalem, trans.**
7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist
- Oct 27** **Proper 25**
7:30 AM Holy Eucharist
10:30 AM Holy Eucharist
- Oct 31** **Paul Shinji Sasaki & Philip Lindel Tsen**
7:30 AM Thursday Morning Eucharist

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From the Rector

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that would last him his whole life. Inspired by Matthew's gospel, Francis committed himself to serving God, and famously shed his clothes and possessions before the bishop in the town square as he left everything to follow God's call. Attracting a small band of brothers, Francis determined to own nothing and to live in solidarity with the poor, preaching the gospel and living on the charity of others. He served as a missionary to Northern Africa and throughout southern Europe. Stories tell of how Francis created the first Nativity scene, preached the gospel to birds, and received the stigmata, marks of Christ's passion on his own body.

Something about Francis has carried on through the ages. He left a few writings, but it is his own story that captivates so many. His order of the Franciscans, the Order of Friars Minor, continues on in the Roman Catholic Church; there are Anglican Franciscan orders for men and women also, the Society of and Community of St Francis, respectively. Even people who have little or no religious background have some sense of who Francis was – hence the popularity of the pet blessings and statues of St Francis in gardens. He represents something about peace, something about real commitment, something about simplicity that still inspires people today.

To me, Francis represents deep love for God and for his fellow human beings – along with a holy impatience for anything that gets in the way of that love. Clinging to possessions and status, Francis knew, distracts us from loving God and our neighbor. Separating ourselves from the rest of creation does the same. We are not owners; we are stewards of creation and of one another. It is a waste of our precious time to worry about what others think of us, or to avoid others we might help. God gave us life so that we might use it to glorify God and serve

other people. So why bother with the rest of it?

Fall often feels like a time of hurried-up schedules, calendars getting further and further crammed with events and meetings. I know that's what my fall feels like, at least. It is a hard time to consider the gifts of simplicity and peace – there are too many new and compelling things to do. But it is a good time to enter into that holy impatience Francis modeled for us. Which of these calendar events are helping bring about God's kingdom, and which are simply frittering away our time? When are we avoiding real relationship with small talk, and when are we truly in loving conversation with one another? We don't, in the end, have much time – and we are never given more of it. So how can we use the time we have to love God and one another better?

One of my favorite passages from scripture says it well: 'Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.' (Hebrews 12:1) I don't think you have to be a runner to appreciate this idea of shaking off what keeps us from moving freely. Anyone who has traveled with luggage understands this feeling.

As we progress further into the fall, I invite you to live a little more like St Francis. Lay aside the things that you don't need to carry so you can travel further; drop the things that prevent you from really being with the companions God has given you. May we together as a community know one another more deeply, and love God better, every day.

Kate Flexer

Bulletin Board

The ECA bulletin board in the fellowship hall is in need of someone new to take ownership—someone to keep it looking good, and more importantly, up to date. Thanks to Susie Ferguson for performing this task so well the past few years. Please contact me (Mike Schmidt) if you would be interested in taking over this responsibility. It won't take up a lot of your time, but someone giving it his or her attention on a regular basis will be appreciated by all of us.

Another need in the area of communications is for someone to take charge of getting The Shape folded and mailed/distributed each month. It's another task that doesn't take up a lot of time, but it requires someone dedicated to getting it done quickly and efficiently. If you think you might be interested, contact me for more specific details concerning what needs to be done.

Mike Schmidt

JV Update

Here is an update from our JV Board: Many thanks to our two Congregations for supporting our facility! Here's a brief update on what's getting done around our facility with the help of many volunteers: upgrades to kitchen equipment including fire suppression hood, refreshed offices and common areas; electrical and fire safety upgrades; the roof!!! (with a special thanks to our roof Czar, Bob Green); repairing lights, lights, and more lights; sprinkler and lawn mower repairs; and continued work on our "curb appeal".

Want to volunteer? Have an idea? Contact one of your JV members. This is especially helpful for any future fund drives to support our call for contributions to capital fund needs, etc. and for volunteers to take on interest in projects that need some work. We have a prioritized list of "must do" and "would love to do" and need to balance those wishes within our budget. Keeping our congregations up to date on our progress and priorities will help greatly!

JV Board members: Jim McPherson, Carolyn Crowley, Joe Machado, Ann Mayers, Kathryn McAbee, Jim McAbee, Brenda McHenry, Jon Mills, Dennis Widman, Debbie Bemis, Bryan Bond, Ellen Lukanc, Rev. Kate Flexer (ECA) and Rev. Michele Rogers Brigham (CCAV).

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From the Senior Warden

I recently received a posting from an Episcopal friend in Roseville who quoted a priest, Rev. Tom Brackett: “Sometimes we need to risk throwing out established protocol in order to ‘save the patient.’ Are we too frightened of loss that we’d rather stagnate in safety?” When ECA started we related with our neighbors very well. As we matured in our neighborhoods we got out of the practice, became comfortable with things as we became “established”, and lost touch to varying degrees.

After much prayer, discussion, and deliberation your Vestry has taken an unprecedented step away from stagnation (some might say ‘risk’) to discern a new future for ECA. Earlier this month we signed a memo of understanding with the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) to join other churches and institutions in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties in broad-based organizing efforts for better communities.

It starts with training a core team to learn how to relate to one another within ECA (i.e., listen and share ideas). We will then enter into parish-wide conversation to establish what is most important to us as a faith-based community.

The risk we take is twofold. To truly listen (relate), we risk changing, learning new things, doing new things – stepping out of our comfort zone. The financial risk is minor (less than \$5,000 over a year) and will not come out of operating funds. The Finance Committee determined that this is affordable and the kind of special project for which the Endowment Fund was intended. The benefit for these risks is potentially large in that we become what Jesus would want us to be – servants in the community in which we live in ever increasingly relevant ways.

So, please support your Vestry, become involved, and pray for our enlightenment as we step forward together. Look for updates with more specifics as we progress a step at a time.

George Romer



Christian Education

Everything and everyone is up and running to start off our fall in Sunday School. We have 16 children on our roster, which is very exciting. How we wish they would all show up every Sunday. But needless to say things are buzzing in both our Preschool/Kindergarten room and our Learning Center on Sundays. You are always welcome to visit between 10 AM and 11 AM to see what's happening. Just find a spot at the back of either room to watch quietly our teachers and students in action.

On Saturday, October 5th from 9 AM to 12 noon we are holding "Safeguarding God's Children." This is an educational program on protecting our children from sexual abuse. All teachers, shepherds, nursery workers, youth leaders and helpers are required to take this course every three years to meet our church wide policy of providing a safe environment for our children. If you plan to be involved with our children and youth in the coming year and have not taken such a course within the last 3 years please sign up to join us. You can register through our Christian Education office. Materials will be provided so pre-registration is encouraged.

As our Sunday School program continues to grow we will be in need of some new furniture to meet the needs of our classes. If you would like to help

with some of our "growing pain" needs, let me know. I will gladly offer suggestions of how you might be able to help or what might fit into your budget.

A special thank you goes to all our teachers and shepherds for this year. Just look at this list: Elizabeth Cihon, Dana Renfand, Debbie Estill, Leslie Rousseau, Wendy Martin, Sandie Mueller, Anne Van der Staay, Emily De La Rosa, Alex Alvarado, Kelli Casale, Ann Mayers, Phyllis Chai, Kelly Yamanishi, & Jan Henderson. These wonderful women are making it possible to hold 2 classes this year.

Teaching and shepherding is not really "just for women." Children love the male influence, too. So men...dads, uncles, & even teens, you might want to give shepherding a try. Just let me know and I will help you get started.

Susie Ferguson



Youth Group

Calling all middle school & high school students!

Our SHYGs and JHYGs finished off the summer gatherings with a bang! In July, the youth spent a glorious day at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom going on rides and watching animal performances. August brought them to camping at Sunset State beach with several non-youth attendees joining in for the fun. Some stayed the night and others came out just for the day. The weather was beautiful and there was lots of fun and laughter had by all.

The second annual summer swim party was again hosted by our gracious Gunderson/Casale home where the youth spent an evening swimming, splashing, and talking. Can you believe they were able to break away from their phones long enough to do this? Amazing! The final BBQ was held on August 25th here at the church with games and movies abound.

September 8th was the first meeting of the new year. Parents brought their teens and then completed permission slips, provided contact information, and signed up to bring dinner to the year's planned meetings while the youth hung out and did what they do best: eat, talk, and text, not quite in that order. :-)

Some of our youth showed up for the Joint Venture Work Day to help spruce up the place. So, how many teenagers does it take to replace a ceiling tile? Give up? 4! One to do the work and three to supervise! It was teamwork through and through from inside jobs to outside jobs. Now we all know, of course, that the only reason why the teens showed up was for the wonderful BBQ spread that was served around noon that day. But

honestly, the youth seem to be learning that many hands make light work.

The events that will bring us through January 2014 include both fun and serious topics. Taking the serious side first is the movie *A Place at the Table*, a movie about hunger in America, and an outing to the Edgar Allen Poe show at West Valley College. Topic meetings will include discussions on texting and driving; faith & doubt; bullying; money & materialism and many more. There will be fund raisers (get ready pie lovers) and other bake sales (get your sweet tooth ready) to raise money for the holiday season of giving. And of course, on the not-so-serious side, there will be days and evenings of fun fellowship. Get your gear ready because a snow trip is being planned for February!

So get ready, youth, as we begin a new year! It is never too late to join us for meetings and outings, so please come and remember that friends are always welcome!

Our wonderful and dedicated youth leaders, Bonnie McPherson and Inge Bond, would love to see you there!

Wendy Martin

Community Organizing

The vestry is excited to announce that we have made the decision to move forward with the community organizing initiative! As you know, we have been studying this possibility for well over a year, and looking more intently at it over the last few months. The organizing work in our area is being led by staff from the IAF (Industrial Areas Foundation), whose purpose is to strengthen institutions like congregations and connect them with others to better serve our communities. Several institutions, Episcopal, Jewish, Catholic, Lutheran, and others in Silicon Valley, are already on board. At the August vestry meeting we voted to affiliate ECA with this effort.

At our September meeting we reaffirmed this decision and met with Joaquin Sanchez, the organizer we have been talking with throughout this process. Joaquin applauded our thoughtful, direct conversation and talked us through a plan of action for the next several months. We are in the initial stage of creating a core team to guide this work at ECA, made up of vestry members and others. Once formed, that team will go through training and lead a campaign of meetings here at ECA, giving everyone in our congregation the opportunity to deepen relationships and talk together in a more intentional way about what is important to us as a faith community. Once those conversations are completed, the core team will work to research and formulate a plan for our future involvement in the community around us. The premise is that until we know one another better here at ECA, we can't know what is truly possible for us to accomplish together.

Stay tuned for more specifics about how you can be involved. And continue to pray for our congregation and its leadership as we discern where God is calling all of us to be.

Kate Flexer



Book Group

This month's meeting is on Wednesday, October 16th. The meeting starts at 7:30 PM and is being hosted by Betty Benson at her home. We'll be discussing *State of Wonder* by Ann Patchett. All are welcome!

Gifts of Gratitude

Susie Ferguson, for her time and talent in setting up the new year for Christian Education classes. Also for her talk on Sunday about what separates us from our time with God.

Inge Bond and Bonnie McPherson, for their time and talent in working to plan the new year of youth group meetings and teachings.

Hank and Sheri Winkenwerder, for Sheri's fabulous note-taking at Vestry meetings and for their time and involvement in the Farmers' Markets on Sundays.

Mary McPherson, for setting up Bible Study.

Ellen Lukanc, for persistence, tact, and doggedness in getting things done (kitchen fire suppression, work weekend, roof repair, etc.).

Todd Lukanc, for operational support (AKA blood, sweat, and tears).

George and Nancy Romer, for hosting our Food for the Poor preacher.

Jim Hinch, Alex Dykes, Rob McClaine, Sharon Mills and Jon Mills for hosting 27 young adults of Bike & Build at the church. A BBQ dinner, a place to sleep and a hot breakfast was provided to cyclists.



**Did you know ECA is on Facebook?
Now you do! Just look up
Episcopal Church in Almaden!**



**Find us on
Facebook**



Join us on October 12th at 6pm for ECA's social event of the year! We'll be feasting on roast pig, delicious sides, and some fantastic desserts. This year the pork will be smoked and pulled instead of pit-roasted. Fear not however, for folks who just can't handle the pork there will be a non-swine vegetarian option. (Please be sure to indicate that with your RSVP.)

Just like last time, the dinner will feature a tacky dress competition. Be sure to dig out your snazziest macramé jackets, parachute pants and gold lamé so you can come to the social event of the year in your tackiest outfit! (And win a prize!) Remember: grass skirts, 1970s chic and crazy hats earn points! Don't have anything tacky? Tease your hair until you look like a character from *Designing Women*.

What to bring: a guest or two or three, and a beverage of your choice (wine & soda will be provided). Not a member of ECA but you get the Shape in the mail anyway? No problem! everyone is invited including everyone from our Joint Venture partner church CCAVUCC.

Cost: \$25 per person (please contact Kate if the cost is a concern, we want everyone to attend!)

Please RSVP by 10/5. You can call me at (408) 839-2632, email me at alex@dykesfamily.net or sign-up in the fellowship hall. (The poster is next to the kitchen door.)

Childcare is free! Kids are always welcome! Be sure to RSVP for childcare!

The Daily Office Challenge

From now through the end of the year, several ECA folk are committing to the Daily Office. They are committing to say at least one of the forms of prayer set for morning, noon, evening, and end of day in the Book of Common Prayer, every day. They may say it alone or with others; they may say the full version of Morning Prayer, Noonday Prayer, Evening Prayer, and Compline, or the one-page version of each of these found in 'Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families.' They may pray using the book, or the versions available online (dailyoffice.org), or the versions available as downloadable apps. But every day, they will pray and read scripture, grounding themselves in the structure and tradition of our Christian and Anglican heritage.

Want to join them? You can! Just start - and sign your name up on the poster in Fellowship Hall so we can cheer you on. You will see more information and support as you go. If you have questions, talk to Kate about how to get started.

Beneficio Coffee

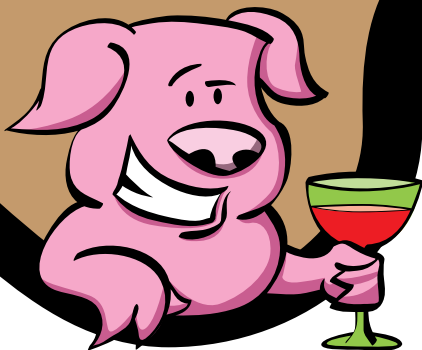
Our Joint Venture Churches continues to serve Beneficio More Than Fair Trade Coffee, which is available for purchase at \$10.50 per 12 oz. bag. Each sale supports the small business farmers and their families in Costa Rica (where Sue Scaff's granddaughter Claire is attending college during her sophomore year).

For questions or to place an order: Contact Phyllis Chai (408-226-7150)



You are cordially invited to ECA's

2013 Wine & Swine



Save the date!

(put me on your fridge)

October 12th

6 PM

Address Service Requested

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