

September 2018

# The SHAPE

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*From the Rector*

## Dear Friends

Henri Nouwen, Dutch mystic and theologian, had this to say about God's generosity:

"God is a god of abundance, not a god of scarcity. Jesus reveals to us God's abundance when he offers so much bread to the people that there are twelve large baskets with leftover scraps (see John 6:5-15), and when he makes his disciples catch so many fish that their boat nearly sinks (Luke 5:1-7). God doesn't give us just enough. God gives us more than enough: more bread and fish than we can eat, *more love than we dared to ask for.*

God is a generous giver, but we can only see and enjoy God's generosity when we love God with all of our hearts, minds, and strength. As long as we say, 'I will love you, God, but first show me your generosity,' we will remain distant from God and unable to experience what God truly wants to give us, which is life and life in abundance."<sup>1</sup>

I think the question of what "God truly wants to give us" is a source of much confusion for Christians. Some think it is prayers answered as we wish. Others think it is a life free of pain and suffering. But, believing this way can lead us to disappointment – and a loss of faith.

As I ponder what God wants to give us, I realize that it is relationship...a relationship so deep and reliable, so genuinely loving, satisfying, and free of self-interest, that it forms us into the most that we can be. This is a

life-long endeavor...a life-long dance of love in which we are woven ever more closely to the dynamic, shared love of the Holy Trinity. This intimacy and growth characterize the abundant life God desires to share with us.

And as we grow in this relationship – this abundant life spreads out to those around us. In Genesis, God tells Abraham that he is "blessed to be a blessing." This was our theme at our last Let's ROC. God blesses us with abundance, and we use that abundance – material and spiritual – to bless others. In this way, the Reign of God is built among us.

How do we increase our ability to "see and enjoy God's generosity?" We ask God to help us open ourselves to God's presence and action in our lives. We look to see how the Holy Spirit is moving among and within us. At ECA this year, we have asked parishioners once a month at the Sunday services to share how they have experienced this themselves. Hopefully, that will have stirred some similar thoughts in all of us.

May the joy of God's generosity move you this month. Blessings,

*Shelley+*

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<sup>1</sup>Henri Nouwen Society, online: <https://henrinouwen.org/meditation/gods-generosity/>

Senior Warden

## Listening for God in the Silence

The Rev. Kate Flexer, in one of her sermons when she was at ECA, shared about going on a ten-day silent retreat. I wondered how anyone could be silent for ten days! I tried to envision the day's activities, such as eating with others around the table and no one talking. I was puzzled about the experience.

This summer I had the opportunity to go on a five-day silent retreat and found out firsthand what it is like to be silent that long. It took me a few days to silence the internal dialogue that goes on in my head, but I did find the silence to be refreshing. Sitting at the table for meals in silence was particularly rewarding. Praying and meditating came easier as I had "less on my mind" and could be open to God's Spirit.

Maryke Williams asked me if there is anything I am doing differently now that I have been to a silent retreat. Certainly we all have been to retreats where we feel closer to God, but the feeling fades as we resume our lives at home. I do look at "silence" differently now. When I find myself at home alone for a length of time, I don't always turn on the music to fill the silence. One day I silently meditated while cleaning our home, folding the laundry, and preparing dinner. I tried to be

open to God's spirit in the silence. Maybe what I am seeking is to learn how to listen in the silence and not feel like I always have to be entertained. It is a journey.

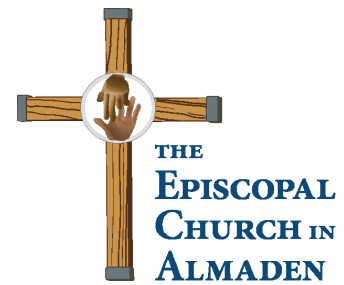
While talking about silent retreats with Maryke, she said the Episcopal Church in Nevada City, where they attend when they are at their cabin, has yearly weekend silent retreats. Perhaps silent retreats are not as unusual as I thought.

I read about a way to pray "in the moment." In his book, *The Divine Dance*, Richard Rohr, describes a prayer using the Hebrew form for the name of God, YHWH, which we usually translate as *Yahweh*. We can "breathe" the name of God as a prayer:

First inhale, saying, *Yah*  
and then exhale, saying, *weh*.

I often find myself sighing because of frustration, anger, disappointment or tiredness, so I try to add *Yahweh* to the sigh as I breathe. When I remember to do that, I bring God's love, wisdom and patience into the situation. It only takes a moment, and it provides me the opportunity to see the problem through God's eyes.

*Marianne Schmidt*



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### Rector

The Reverend Shelley Denney  
email: shelleys@eca-sj.org  
408-268-0245

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### Staff

**Lynda Ford**  
*Music Director*

**Ruthanne Adams Martinez**  
*Administrative Assistant*  
*Treasurer*

**Holly McCullough**  
*Building Bridges Coordinator*

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### Assisting in our Ministry

**Marianne Schmidt**  
*Senior Warden*

**Don Hall**  
*Junior Warden*

**Joan Wagner**  
*Altar Guild*

**Ann Avoux**  
*Prayer Vine*

**Debbie Estill**  
*Ushers*

**Mike Schmidt**  
*Shape Editor*  
*Pastoral Care Coordinator*

**Kathleen Eagan**  
*Senior Ministry*

**Taylor Wing**  
*Webmaster*

Stewardship

## Coming Attractions

The Stewardship team is proud to announce some upcoming dates. October is the culmination of our year around stewardship program - it is our opportunity to celebrate the gifts we have been given and have shared, and to prayerfully discern what we will be sharing and giving in the coming year!

**September 23rd** is the date that your pledge packet is mailed out. This is a time to review last years giving and to look to the coming year. This provides the tools to break down income to percentage of giving, so that we can prayerfully consider how we are using the treasure that God has given us!

**October 14th** is the 1st annual Jesus Followers Pep Rally! This is a old fashioned celebration of our service activities over the last year, as we build the excitement for what is to come in 2019! This is a whole church affair, as all of us are an integral piece in our service to the community and to God! This is a FUN event- with appetizers, wine, pompoms, and exciting speakers from our different service activities! Look for a Eblast announcement coming to a computer near you!

**October 28th** is In-Gathering Sunday! This day is our opportunity to come together and dis-

cern together as a church community what the spirit is calling us to give of our treasure as we turn in our pledges for the coming year! This day will have a special speaker who has an exciting story to share and a potluck lunch after the second service. This is a all-hands on-deck event. Please put this important date on your calendar!

Hugs my fellow Jesus Followers, thanks for all you do!

Bonnie McPherson

## Book Group

The JV Book Group will meet on Wednesday, September 21st (3rd Wednesday of the month), at 5:30 PM, at the Marie Callender's Restaurant on Blossom Hill Road. September's book is *Flight Behavior*, by Barbara Kingsolver. Please RSVP to Amy Griffith (408 268-0920 or email amy-g@pacbell.net). October's book will be *Small Great Things*, by Jodi Picoult.



## Looking Forward

- Mini Kids Camp • October 4 and 5
- Blessing of the Animals/Let's ROC • October 6
- Last Summer BBQ • October 7
- Pep Rally • October 14
- In-Gathering Sunday • October 28

### JV members:

Bill Lavallee, Joe Machado and Don Hall

### Vestry members:

**Senior Warden**  
Marianne Schmidt

**Junior Warden**  
Don Hall

**Communication**  
Joyce Wing  
Inge Bond

**Stewardship**  
Bonnie McPherson

**Finance**  
Todd Lukanc

**Outreach and Connection Team**  
Kathy Mastre

**Pastoral Care and Senior Ministry**  
Marianne Schmidt

**Family and Youth Ministries**  
Rachael Parahk

**Adult Ministry**  
Wendy Martin

**Hospitality and Fellowship**  
Wendy Martin  
Kathy Mastre  
Bonnie McPherson

# ECA Activities September 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 7:30am Holy Eucharist 9:15am Summer Sunday Series 10:45am Holy Eucharist	3 <u>LABOR DAY</u> 9:30am Yoga	4	5 12pm Healing Service and Holy Eucharist 3:30pm Centering Prayer 4pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	6 8am Men's Breakfast 9:30am Morning Prayer 10am Lectionary Bible Study 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	7	8 6:30pm John Leslie Play, <i>Souvenir</i>
9 7:30am Holy Eucharist 10am ECA/CCAC Joint Worship Service 11:30am Connection Team Meeting 1:30pm John Leslie Play, <i>Souvenir</i>	10 9:30am Yoga	11 7:15pm Vestry Meeting	12 3:30pm Centering Prayer 4pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	13 8am Men's Breakfast 9:30am Morning Prayer 10am Lectionary Bible Study 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	14	15 4:30pm Let's ROC Let's Create Workshop
16 7:30am Holy Eucharist 10:45am Holy Eucharist	17 9:30am Yoga	18 7:30pm JV Board Meeting	19 3:30pm Centering Prayer 4pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal 5:30pm Book Group 7pm Class/Discussion Group	20 8am Men's Breakfast 9:30am Morning Prayer 10am Lectionary Bible Study 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	21 2pm Montgomery Meals 2pm Stewardship Committee Mtng.	22
23 7:30am Holy Eucharist 10:45am Holy Eucharist	24 9:30am Yoga 6pm Cooking w/ Alain Class	25	26 3:30pm Centering Prayer 4pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	27 8am Men's Breakfast 9:30am Morning Prayer 10am Lectionary Bible Study 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	28	29 4:30pm Bocce and Italian Feast
30 7:30am Holy Eucharist 10:45am Holy Eucharist						



## Blessed to Be a Blessing

My standard invitation to and description of Let's ROC is this: "If you're looking for a place to rest with friends on a Saturday night, hear God in an unexpected way, be known, valued and called to care for those around you – Let's ROC is the place for you! Let's ROC – Reach Out in Community – is a welcoming and intergenerational community. We listen for God's voice, encounter God at the table and respond to God with love."

In August, Let's ROC was exactly this. Friends worked together making playdough for the preschool at Santa Maria Urban Ministry and writing our prayers of the people. We heard God in an ancient story, and in the stories of our friends. We were an intergenerational community of fifteen, gathered at the table.

Our theme was, "Blessed to Be a Blessing." The phrase came from the twelfth chapter of Genesis via our awesome and colorful backpack tags. We gathered to hear the story of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah. At the beginning of this particular story, God tells Abram that he will become the father of a great nation and that the world will be blessed through him. The conclusion of the story reminded us that we are a part of the family of Abraham, and God asks

us to bring God's blessings into the world. There was a lot to the middle of the story though, there was lots of walking through the desert, finding God and wondering where God would be found.

Over the next few months we'll be working to share the blessings of this ECA community with our neighborhood and the wider world. The next Let's ROC is September 15th. Let's ROC will be an opportunity to invite and welcome neighbors and an opportunity to have life giving conversation with friends. We'll build community while we reach out to folks around us.

In October we'll be having a mini two day camp, Thursday October 4th and Friday October 5th, followed by honoring the Feast of Saint Francis by blessing an animals. I'm still

looking for help for Friday the 5th. A wonderful way to share the blessing of this camp would be to share a registration form with a friend or neighbor. Watch for them in the narthex, and for a link you can share in the midweek.

One last blessing to share with you all, this month at "Let's ROC" my two-year-old daughter started talking during the Prayer of Thanksgiving. "It's like church," she said. Then she said, "it's like home." It is such a blessing to me that she is able to experience a church that feels like home. Please pray with me that we can invite and welcome more children to grow up in a home like ECA.

Holly

Holly McCullough,  
holly@eca-sj.org  
Building Bridges Coordinator



*A multi-generational "hands on" project in the foreground, and table discussion in the background, at August's Let's ROC.*

## Notes From the Day Center

The Day Center is closing and moving on in less than a week as I write this, and this will be my last shift during this current operation, as I work the last few days they are here...so I'm feeling a bit nostalgic. Don't get me wrong, I'm looking forward to having my days back, as so much of my time off is spent getting ready for them to come, being here with them while they are here, and getting things back to Village House afterwards... but I love having them here! I love getting to know the individual ladies, I love the opportunity to get to spend time with my friends here at ECA, and I have so loved meeting the volunteers from all the different faith communities who so lovingly and willingly serve with us in the Day Center.

I know there has been concern that the center hasn't been packed most days, but the ladies who are here are so grateful for this peaceful place and the loving people who have welcomed them here, and that may have been the sole purpose for our being called to reopen the center...but maybe God had a secondary agenda. Maybe the fellowship we have had with our fellow parishioners and all the other faith communities is a big part of why God was calling us to

reopen. Maybe embracing the interfaith aspect of being "crazy Christians", working together to accomplish things that one community can't do on it's own, was God's secondary purpose!?

I'm a big fan of Bishop Curry, I think he is a rock star, and I see how he has embraced the interfaith movement, and is using his relationship with these other faiths to gain traction in speaking out against racism, prejudice, greed, and lying, and speaking UP for acceptance, generosity, service and LOVE!

I may be overthinking things, but I see the openness to accepting help from other faith communities, building relationships with each other, volunteers and our ladies, taking risks, and the excitement that emanates from our service as being the work of the Holy Spirit alive and permeating our building and all who enter it!

I don't know God's reason for pushing so many of us to feel the call to reopen the Day Center, but I love the excitement, I love the sense of purpose, and I feel the love, and as Bishop Curry keeps saying, you will know them, Jesus' followers, by their love! Thank you my fellow Jesus Followers for your loving service!

Bonnie McPherson

## Well Done, Susie!!

On Sunday, August 19th, the congregation saluted Susie Ferguson for her years of service to ECA as Director of Children and Youth Ministries. A complete list of Susie's contributions and accomplishments would be staggering. A mere photo album would not have been enough, so Wendy Martin created a photo book, which was presented to Susie. Tribute was also paid through a couple of familiar songs, which were rewritten and sung by Kimberly Axtell and Rachael Parahk. We wanted to reprint those songs here in the Shape, so that more of the congregation could "hear" them.

### Songs of Thankfulness and Praise

*Songs of thankfulness and praise,  
for Susie's many gifts we raise.  
Loving church and loving God,  
reveals a fearless vision broad.  
Children's camps and Sunday  
School,  
helps to teach the golden rule.  
Loved of God and blessed by us,  
we'll proclaim we love you  
much.*

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## Our Favorite Things

*Splash zones in summer  
And pageants in winter  
Bright-eyed kid campers and  
quick costume changers  
Narrator telling the tender babe's  
birth  
These are a few of our favorite  
things.*

*Fun colored crayons and fall  
pumpkin patches  
Hand chimes and church bells  
And blessing of classes  
Our Children's Director is  
always in swing  
These are a few of our favorite  
things.*

*Kids in white art smocks  
with blue painted splatters  
Stage crew and lighting up  
high on the ladders  
Creative chaos that turns  
into peace  
These are a few of our favorite  
things.*

*When the creche breaks  
When the babe clings  
When the teacher's ill  
We simply remember our  
favorite things  
And thank our director's skills.*

*Character puppets  
And skits for rehearsing  
Volleyball matches till bruises  
need nursing  
Festive ice igloo with grass on  
the ground  
These are a few of our favorite  
things.*

*Biblical stories and songs "in  
the round"  
Grateful and playful  
She showed God's love abounds  
Our Children's Director most  
surely has wings  
These are a few of our favorite  
things.*

*Crafts with white glue sticks and  
blue birdhouse gardens  
Mission Trip checklist and books  
bought on bargains  
For our youth leader there's  
nothing daunting  
These are a few of our favorite  
things.*

*Problem Solving  
Organizing  
Susie's capable  
We'll simply remember our  
favorite things  
She made us all trainable.*

*Praise and singing  
Storytelling  
Her role now departs  
We'll simply remember our  
favorite things  
And keep them so close to  
heart.*





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Fellowship

## Bocce, Fun, and Good Italian Food

We have a exciting fellowship event coming up at the end of this month! On Saturday, September 29th, Arnold and Susanne Moore are graciously offering up their beautiful back yard and Bocce Ball court for an evening of Bocce ball playing (and learning for those of us who haven't had the opportunity- Arnold is a great teacher!), an Italian feast and wonderful fellowship! The evening will start at about 4:30pm, as the yard is in partial shade, and go until about 9pm. Put this event into your personal calendar and plan to attend.

## Mission to the Virgin Islands

The Rev. David Starr recently spent six weeks on the island of Virgin Gorda, in the Virgin Islands. The island has a population of about 3000 people, almost all of who are descendants of slaves. He was there at the invitation of the Episcopal Diocese of the Virgin Islands, to provide relief to the supply clergy of the parish of St Mary the Virgin, in the British Virgin Islands. The parish and the island have been struggling to recover from Hurricane Irma last year, whose hurricane-force winds, along with 9 tornados, destroyed all green vegetation on

the island. In addition to the destruction from the storm, David found a parish traumatized by a lack of pastoral leadership and from conflict between the congregation and the current lay leadership.

David was able to help get the church services back into the main church building, giving them a semblance of return to normalcy. He also gained the bishop's approval to schedule a vestry election, in hopes that confidence between the congregation and lay leadership could be restored. On the eve of the church meeting, David admits he was worried, wondering whether the lay leadership situation might totally fall apart. But at the meeting, nine strong, dedicated women stepped forward to form a new vestry, a result David attributes to the working of the Holy Spirit. He has since been in contact with the bishop, who has visited the parish, and who reports that the church is now on solid footing, and he anticipates a strong relationship with St. Mary the Virgin in the future.

## Gifts of Gratitude

*This is a "reverse gift of gratitude," from Susie Ferguson to the congregation ...*

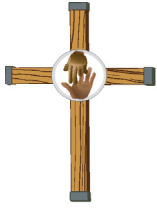
•Thank you just isn't enough.... I have looked slowly through the photo album and read all your notes, reread the songs and lantern notes, gazed at the beautiful lantern with all those special hearts, and opened the gift certificates for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Wow!! You have been more than generous and have totally overwhelmed me with your love. Thank you seems so small. You are all so very special to me, have supported and encouraged me, and given me so many wonderful opportunities to be creative. I love you all for all that you have given me and for all that you mean to me. I hope our story will only continue in new ways.

*My sincere appreciation  
and love,  
Susie*



*Episcopal Church women on Virgin Gorda prepared and served breakfast to the fathers of the community after the 7am service on Father's Day.*





## Worship Schedule

**September 2** – *Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**September 5**

12pm Healing Service and  
Holy Eucharist

**September 9** – *Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**September 15**

4:30 p.m. Let's ROC

**September 16** – *Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost*

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**September 23** – *Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**September 30** – *Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

7:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
10:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist

## Gifts of Gratitude

Thank you ..

•to Betty and Dom, Susanne and Arnold, Amy, Joan, Carol and Joyce for cleaning and organizing items, over a three day period, in all of the kitchen cabinets and the fellowship hall closets. They look great, and we now have more space! Job well done!

•to Alain Guichard for cleaning the oven/stove in the main kitchen, lots of scrubbing was required. Thank you to Alain, Joyce and Betty for cleaning the kitchen cabinets, they really needed some attention!

•to EVERYONE who helped make the July Day Center such a successful and blessed affair! There were SO many who made this happen, but I do need to give a shout out to some who literally lived at the center and were heavily involved in setting up, planning and making sure everything went smoothly, and tearing the center down after the ladies moved on. Thank you to Joyce, Judi, Letty, Marianne, Pat, Marion, Mike, Melinda, Leslie, Monique, Shelley, Jenny, Kathy, and Steve! Thank you to all you lunch warriors, too, I know that Joyce, Anne, Michelle, Betty, Pat and Jenny made multiple meals, and the ladies were over the top about the food! Lastly, thank you for the support from everyone at ECA from Shelley on down who support, pray for and love the ladies while they are here. The ladies noticed every last detail, and so love our church family!

•to Marianne Schmidt for her faithful work as Senior Warden, and for the extra work and carrying the canonical authority while I (Shelley) was on vacation.

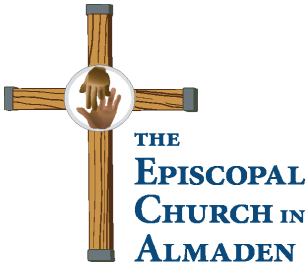
•to the Vestry Members for their dedication and willingness to do the hard work of discernment and seeking God's guidance for our parish.

•to Alain Guichard and Steve Wing, Sharon Hall, Joyce Wing, and all who work hard to serve our homeless neighbors in our Montgomery Meals program.

•to the members of the Connection Team: Kimberly Axtell, Kathy Mastre, Bonnie McPherson, Letty Duenas, and Judi Dimicelli for their continuing work on hosting a Living Room Conversation on homelessness.

•to Susie Ferguson: words cannot contain the gratitude of this parish for her faithful, creative, energetic, and fruitful work as Director of Children and Youth Ministries. She has set a very high bar and tremendous example, and we so appreciate her willingness to volunteer in various ministries, even after her retirement as staff.

•to all who helped with Susie's retirement celebration: Wendy for creating the photo album, Kimberly and Rachael for composing and singing their songs, and Joyce for the "Hearts Lantern."



6581 Camden Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95120

## September Birthdays

Ted Fahlen	September	05
Kelli Casale		08
Jan Henderson		08
Dorothy Willard		09
Debbie Estill		14
Maryke Williams		17
Pat McGarvin		19
Jerry Long		20
Kathy Mastre		24
Joe Machado		28
Nancy Romer		29

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