

December 2018

The SHAPE

From the Rector

Dear Friends

What will you notice this Advent? From where you're standing, what will you see? The possibilities are limitless, of course, but what we choose to observe and contemplate for the next four weeks will shape our experience of Christmas, year-end, and even the new year's beginning. What we focus on forms us.

We can start by noticing what phrases strike us from our weekly scriptures. What sparkles for you, catching your attention? What strikes you as odd or misplaced? In the gospel from the First Sunday of Advent, I am struck by Jesus' words, "Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

When distressing, fearful, confusing things begin to happen, my first instinct is not to stand up and raise my head! That instinct is more like ducking, taking cover, and praying. But, I would surely not want to miss the approach of my redemption! I would not want to miss the sight of the in-breaking of God's kingdom into our world.

So, perhaps I should consider what it would be like to look on those events in the world that bring fear and foreboding in the light of Jesus' promise of the approach of our salvation. For instance, one such event is wildfire. As I think of all of the people who have lost their homes, businesses, all of their possessions, and for many – their lives or the lives of their loved ones – in the Camp fire in Butte County, I certainly grieve, pray, and give. But amidst the almost overwhelming grief, can I focus on the thousands of people who have donated money, goods, time, energy, and

love to help the survivors? How about the hundreds of people – including many fire fighters – who worked to serve Thanksgiving dinner to thousands of homeless fire escapees in Chico? Literally, among the ashes of those communities, new life is rising from the love of strangers with compassionate hearts. That is a sign of God's reign breaking into our everyday world.

Where else can we see the approach of our salvation in the days of this next month of Advent? When we are struck by the ills of our society, can we stand up, raise our heads and look for where love is leading the way, sustaining life, and giving hope?

Advent is a season of waiting – of preparation – not only for the remembering of the birth of the Christ Child two millennia ago, but more so for the coming of our salvation...for the building of the Reign of God right here in our world. So, let's pay attention to what we observe and contemplate around us, with eyes wide open, this Advent.

Blessings,

Shelley+

January Cometh

It's hard to believe as I'm writing this that we are a short 6 weeks from welcoming the ladies back to our loving and cozy space in January. We will need all hands on deck, as well as help from all our friends from the other churches who have so graciously assisted us in the past. You will be seeing sign ups in the very near future, as well as opportunities to assist us in getting the space ready to welcome our guests. Please keep the ladies, our church, and Village House in your prayers as we care for God's people.

December is going to be a rough time for the ladies without a day center, and a hard time on the volunteers for Village House as we man St Paul's downtown with minimal assistance from the host congregation, so if there is any time you have to share during December, the ladies would love to see you!

January cometh! We need to be ready to welcome our honored guests back into our home. Be a part of that welcome and experience the joy!

Hugs, Jesus followers, and Merry Christmas!

Bonnie McPherson

Book Group

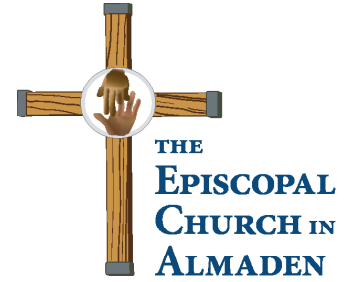
The JV Book Group will not meet in December. The next Book Group meeting will be the third Wednesday in January (16th). January's book will be *Back When We Were Grownups*, by Anne Tyler.

Coffee Hosts Needed

This coming year, two long-time coffee hosts will be moving out of the area. Coffee hosting is a wonderful way to hang out with the wonderful folks at ECA and doesn't require much work. The church provides coffee, and the host provides creamer and treats. As a coffee host, you can make treats as fancy or simple as you want. It doesn't take much time and is fun. Please contact me if you are interested in volunteering for hosting.

Smiles and hugs!!

Kathy Mastre
408/833-4482 (cell phone)



Rector

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Staff

Lynda Ford
Music Director

Ruthanne Adams Martinez
Administrative Assistant
Treasurer

Holly McCullough
Building Bridges Coordinator

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

Senior Warden

A Painful Search for God

November was a new journey for me. When I strained my back, my newly diagnosed arthritis flared up to a level of pain I had never felt before. Pain at a level ten commanded all my attention and focus. It took several days to get the diagnosis and appropriate medication and still more days before I got some relief.

I had the pain; I have the memory of the pain, and now I live in fear of the pain. The disillusionment of having a body that had been working well, changed to a body that can have me writhing on the floor, shattered my reality. I admit, I am shaken by the experience.

I tried to pray, but the words were mainly a cry for help. As the pain subsided, the pain medications caused my brain to be befuddled, so praying got harder. Finally, as I was able to stop the pain meds, I sought the path to God through meditation. It was not easy, but I was glad I had the “spiritual muscle memory” of meditating the past few years, so I found the way back to the path to being in God’s presence. My first step was to realize, at a deeper level, that my body does not define who I am, and I am not just my brain with all its wild and fuzzy thoughts. I am spirit, made in God’s image, and my spirit can

commune with God, regardless of the new reality of my body and my fuzzy brain.

Eleven years ago, when Mike was waiting a few days for open-heart surgery to repair his heart valve, he said he had to come to grips with the fact that his body had failed him. He was facing a new reality, as many of my friends with their diagnosis of arthritis have had to come to a new reality about their bodies. One friend said she got angry, but used the anger to motivate changes in her daily routine that allowed her to be in charge again.

Shelley’s sermon on November 24th spoke to me in my reflection on the pain I experienced. Quoting Barbara Brown Taylor, *“Disillusionment is, literally, the loss of an illusion — about ourselves, about the world, about God — and while it is almost always a painful thing, it is never a bad thing to lose the lies we have mistaken for the truth.”*

If we follow Jesus as our King of Truth, not only is it not a bad thing to lose the lies we’ve mistaken for the truth...it’s a necessary thing.

I never anticipated I would have to struggle to let go of the illusion that my body would not fail me. As much as I am enjoying all the activities I am involved in, I am forced to rethink the balance of work and rest; of what I want to do and how to take care of my body. In the end, my body has a definite way to “help” me find that

balance. I appreciate all those who are on this journey with me, and the help each of you give in sharing your experiences of the journey.

*Marianne Schmidt,
Senior Warden*

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 December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 11am Confirmation Class 4pm Christmas Party
2 7:30am Holy Eucharist 9:15am Sunday Forum 10:45am Holy Eucharist 12:30pm Village House Meeting	3 9:30am Yoga	4	5 12pm Healing Service and Holy Eucharist 3:30pm Centering Prayer 4:30pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	6 8am Men's Breakfast 9:30am Morning Prayer 10am Lectionary Bible Study 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	7	8 8am Knitwits Chase the Chill 11am Confirmation Class
9 7:30am Holy Eucharist 9:15am Sunday Forum 10:45am Holy Eucharist/ Folk Choir Sunday 12:30pm Connection Team Meeting	10 9:30am Yoga	11 7:15pm Vestry Meeting	12 3:30pm Centering Prayer 4:30pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	13 8am Men's Breakfast 9:30am Morning Prayer 10am Lectionary Bible Study 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	14	15 11am Confirmation Class 4:30pm Let's ROC/ Christmas Pageant
16 <i>Bishop Mary Visitation and Confirmation</i> No 7:30am Service 10:45am Holy Eucharist	17 9:30am Yoga	18	19 3:30pm Centering Prayer 4:30pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	20 8am Men's Breakfast 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal	21 2pm Mont-gomery Meals	22 2pm Beth Copeland Memorial
23 7:30am Holy Eucharist 10:45am Holy Eucharist	24 <u>CHRISTMAS EVE</u> 5pm Family Eucharist with Music 9pm Traditional Candlelight Eucharist with Music & Choir	25 <u>CHRISTMAS DAY</u>	26 4:30pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal	27 8am Men's Breakfast 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	28	29
30 7:30am Holy Eucharist 10:45am Holy Eucharist with Bells and Carols	31 9:30am Yoga					

Outreach

ECA Hosts Living Room Conversation on Homelessness

On Sunday afternoon, Nov 11, ECA hosted 27 people from our neighborhood, nearby churches, and organizations in a “Living Room Conversation” about homelessness. The idea was not just to have another conversation about this problem, but rather, to gather interested people, begin to form relationships, and explore the possibilities of working together toward addressing the root causes of homelessness in our area.

For two years, our parish has been active in Village House – a local cooperative of churches and synagogues who provide day and night shelters for up to 15 medically fragile homeless women. Village House offers safety, shelter, food, social services, and hope. This commitment has been transformative for us, and we will continue with this work. But we wanted to do more. We wanted to help people avoid homelessness.

The Connection Team (our community organizing group) decided that in order to have some impact on this huge problem, we needed partners. We needed to come together with others to gain the power to act effectively. So, we decided to host a “Living Room Conversation” to bring interested folks together.

Participants responded well to the Living Room Conversation format, because it emphasizes listening, learning, and sharing our own experiences. Some felt hopeful and some felt overwhelmed. We identified some next steps, including: finding more conversation partners, learning exactly what the city and county are already doing, and talking with other groups that are responding to homelessness.



ECA will host two “House Meetings” in conjunction with the Industrial Areas Foundation’s work toward forming a broad-based organization in the South Bay. These will be in February and March 2019. We will also launch some “research actions” to gain the information needed to move forward together. Our hope is that with a lot of concerned, ordinary people working together, along with a city with good intentions to solve this problem, we can find some solutions.

Shelley Denney

(Left) Anna Eng, ECA’s liaison with IAF, addressing the group that attended the meeting on November 11.

(Below) Attendees at the recent Living Room Conversation, sharing with and listening to one another, on the topic of homelessness.



Chime In at ECA

In October we started our Chime In at ECA music program. This is a music offering for children, first through fifth grade, to learn to play the chimes and share their music with all of us at Let's ROC. In October of this year we began our program with 3 "chimers" which grew to 6 "chimers" in November, who shared their music with us at our Let's ROC Thanksgiving Feast. Our next group of "chimers" will be playing at our Let's ROC Christmas Pageant on December 15th. I hope you will take time to read the biographies of our musicians. We have a "Bio Board" on display in Fellowship Hall.

Most exciting with this program are the new families we are meeting and getting to know. After the children meet with me 3 or 4 times to prepare for our monthly Let's ROC we meet their families and siblings and share Eucharist and dinner. We are introducing them to our ECA family through music, a Saturday worship experience and fellowship through dinner.

I encourage you to join us at Let's ROC and help us welcome these wonderful families into our community. Come and be blessed at Let's ROC by these children and their families.

Susie Ferguson

Vestry Update

The Vestry is considering nominations for the 2019 Vestry. The terms will be expiring for 3 of the Vestry and 2 others, whose terms are not yet expiring, will be moving out of the area in 2019. Todd Lukanc has agreed to stay on the Vestry for one more year and Joyce Wing has agreed to stay for 3 more years.

ECA is supporting St. Marks of Santa Clara with meals as they are housing the Village House ladies for the month of November. Many jobs remain open and Bonnie encourages all who are interested to sign up to help.

Results of the 2019 pledge campaign are not yet available. We are still receiving pledge cards and encourage those who have not yet sent theirs in to complete their pledges as soon as possible so that the 2019 budget can be developed.

Pledge income received was at 97% percent of plan by the first week of November. However, plate income is only 35% of the anticipated amount. This is largely due to lower attendance throughout the year. Spending is higher than planned, so it is looking very likely that we will end the year with an operating deficit, although the full amount is not yet known.

Elizabeth Guichard



Maryke Williams and Susie Ferguson, assisting the "chimers", who provided musical accompaniment for the worship portion of the Let's ROC/Thanksgiving feast.

Worship Schedule

December 2 – *First Sunday of Advent*

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

December 5

12 p.m. Healing Service and
Holy Eucharist

December 9 – *Second Sunday of Advent*

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

December 15

4:30 p.m. Let's ROC/Christmas
Pageant

December 16 – *Third Sunday of Advent*

Visitation by Bishop Mary
No 7:30am Service
10:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist

December 23 – *Fourth Sunday of Advent*

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

December 24 – *Christmas Eve*

5 p.m. Family Eucharist
with Music
9 p.m. Traditional Candlelight
Eucharist with Music
and Choir

December 30 – *First Sunday after Christmas*

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

Gifts of Gratitude

Thank you ..

•to Inge and Bryan Bond, from the Stewardship Committee, for helping with the set up and clean up of the potluck on Pledge Ingathering Sunday

•to all who gave funds for the South Sudan Youth Ministry, as the students are very appreciative of your kindness and generosity

•to Roger Hoyt, for all of your support as a counter over the years; it has been greatly appreciated

•to Bill LaVallee, for serving as Sunday Counter. Your experience makes the process so efficient and enjoyable

•to Bill Schaefer, for joining the counters. Your willingness to serve is much appreciated

•to all who came to the Pep Rally and Ingathering Sunday. The Stewardship Committee appreciates the willingness our church community has to give so generously of their time, talent and treasure!

•Village House thanks all the Jesus Followers who have been supporting the ladies and our friends at St. Marks during the month of November. You guys are rock stars!

•to the Rev. Lucretia Mann, for sharing your skills, knowledge and love of teaching by leading the forum, "Becoming the Beloved Community

•to Melinda Jennings, Wendy Martin, and Jenny Hoyt for each cooking a turkey for *Let's ROC*

•to Judi Dimicelli, for making announcements and collecting RSVPs for *Let's ROC*

•to Bonnie McPherson, for organizing our meal support of St. Mark's Village House. Your faith is boundless

•to Steve Wing, for supporting our Vestry meetings through secretary note taking. He serves at a moment's notice and with a happy heart

•to Kimberly Axtell, for the beautiful flyers and signage you made for the Living Room Conversation event

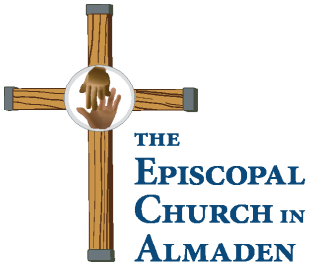
•to all the members of ECA who attended the Living Room Conversations on Homelessness. Your commitment and love for your surrounding community WILL make a difference

Looking Forward

Warming Center begins •
January 4

Let's ROC • January 20

Annual Meeting • January 27



6581 Camden Avenue
San Jose, CA 95120

December Birthdays

Jonathon Beacher	December	01
Marion Grunge		02
Martha Lou Reynolds		02
Betty Consorte		05
Lola Fahlen		06
Susie Ferguson		13
Susanne Moore		16
Kathleen Eagan		19
Gary Keck		19
Francie Kerr		19
Mike Schmidt		26

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