

Saints Alive!

A publication of All Saints Episcopal Parish in San Leandro, California
www.saintsalive.net • allsaintsepiscopal@att.net

February 2009

Social Ministries

Answer to Your Prayer

Crab Feed February 21

Gift of Abundance

Sacred Circle Dance

eScrip

Walk with Me

Active Listening

Altar Guild

Spirit of Song

Around the City

Mark Your Calendars



Good News for Tough Times

Fr. Rob Droste, Rector

At the amazing vestry retreat last month, Bishop Steven Charleston (our assisting bishop) spoke about what the church has to offer its members and friends—and especially those who have no spiritual home. He boiled it down to five words: “Good News for tough times.”

Of course, he’s absolutely right. It’s a phrase that carries all of what’s best, and true, and real, about the Church. It tells us who we are, what we do, and who we are called to be. We can use it as a standard against which we measure everything we do.

I do this, for example, when I’m working on my Sunday morning talks. I ask myself, “What does All Saints need to hear in this week’s scriptures?” I’m pretty aware of what’s going on in people’s lives, so I try to let that guide what I say. Is it Good News for tough times?

We can, and will, use this measure to help guide how we worship together. People shouldn’t have to look too hard for Good News on Sunday mornings. It should be easy for them to know, from worshiping with us, that God has a plan for creation. That this plan is unfolding and most visible in the life, person and work of Jesus. And that following Christ is a powerful, proven, reliable path to the true freedom and peace that God wants for each of us.

To be sure, Good News is about words and worship, and far more. It’s so very much about action. Our concern for one another, the professional pastoral care we provide, and the kindness we receive from one another all offer Good News. And our actions that feed the hungry—our Food Pantry, sandwiches for the Interfaith Homelessness Network, dinners for Building Futures, and more—are certainly what people need to “hear” right now!

I hope we'll all take time to think about the Good News we are offering one another and our neighbors. We can pray this many times each day: "God, I want everything I do or say to be Good News for tough times. Please guide and help me and my spiritual companions to be just that."

To learn more about Bishop Charleston, check out his biography on the Diocese of California website at www.diocal.org.

Social Ministries

Tom Breckenridge

Bountiful Food Pantry . . .

The All Saints Parish Food Pantry has gotten off to a terrific start. There have been over 300 visitors representing 850 household members in our five pantry events. Once again, All Saints is delivering good news in tough times.



. . . and Bountiful Bucks

We are able to obtain some of this food for free, other items at low cost—but there is cost. It works out that we have spent about \$1 for each of those 850 folks. Enter the Bountiful Bucks campaign. You will see a beautiful blue bucket in conspicuous places at the church. Every time you drop a buck in the bucket, you have provided the groceries for one household member at the next food pantry!

The Social Ministries Team extends its gratitude to the parish for rallying behind this ministry so enthusiastically. What a blessing to be part of a community that cares so much and takes action to help those in need.

This Could Be the Answer to Your Prayer

Are you stumped by

- Mysterious computer "glitches"?
- Setting up printers, wireless connections, etc.?
- Diagnosing software problems?
- Figuring out Microsoft products?

John Trubina, our own deacon in training, can diagnose and fix your computer problems. Call 415-517-5646. Reasonable hourly rates.

Crab Feed February 21: Make a Prize Basket

Ken Wright

At our last Crab Feed meeting we were trying to come up with something new and fun. This year we are going to have a Canadian Raffle. We will sell tickets as before, but it will be a 50–50 event. The Church will get 50%, and the balance will be shared as cash prizes by the winners in a drawing.

I am asking for your help though once again (you always come through). We would like a few baskets to raffle off with the above prizes. Perhaps you could double up with someone else to make up a super prize. Contact me at 351-6651.

I thank you once again for your support.

The Gift of Abundance

Maxine Sitts, Shopper for Food Pantry

Just before Thanksgiving, a very generous donor provided All Saints with more turkeys than we could immediately distribute or freeze at our church—5 dozen, to be exact! We gave away some locally but ended up with 48 that we couldn't place. We found that no nearby food pantries could handle that many. For the short term, Schaefer's Meat & Cold Storage in Oakland came to the rescue. Kathleen Waters trucked the birds to the huge Schaefer's freezer for a temporary stay. Rather than hoard the birds, we then looked farther away for a deserving program that could turn the turkeys into food for hungry people.

A sister parish, St. Raphael's, Oakhurst, helps with a weekly dinner for the homeless in cooperation with the local Methodist Church. They also work closely with the Episcopal Church of the Savior, Hanford, which gives out 300 lunches six days a week in their parish hall. Two of the Saint Raphael's volunteers, Dennis and Nancy Fitzgerald, traveled from Oakhurst on January 2 to pick up the turkeys and drive them back to be divided between the two programs.

It was an exciting time for the turkeys, but even more so for the volunteers who worked on this donation. God is indeed good, and provides abundance. Sometimes it is up to us to serve as good stewards of the abundance. Thanks to the turkey donor, to Kathleen, to Schaefer's, to the Fitzgeralds (who made the trek from the San Joaquin Diocese), and to St. Raphael's for making this happen. All the turkeys are ending up in deserving food bank programs.

Now, if we could only locate another freezer . . . Possible?



Sacred Circle Dance—Beginners Welcome

Maureen Atkins

Sacred Circle Dance at All Saints is coming along nicely. I now have a website. It is www.maureenatkins.com. It gives good information about the kind of dancing we do. We are a “beginners welcome” group. If someone wishes to come and simply observe, this is fine too. The best place to dance is the Fireside Room. It provides a good space for moving as well as sitting out and relaxing.

Our next meeting will be Saturday, February 14, 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Last month we did a dance called Senegal Chant in honor of the Uganda Project. The music, based on a Ugandan prayer, is sung by the monks of Kevr Moussa Monastery, Senegal, with words in the Wolof language; the drum accompaniment is by Muslims, who often play during services at the Catholic monastery. The words are “Purify me with holy water, O Lord. Wash me and I shall be as white as snow.” This was one of our more meditative dances.

For February, we shall do dances that are heart centered. Of course there will be a celebratory dance in honor of the election! We will have a fine time. At our last gathering one of the dancers surprised us with a cake. Hope to see you there!

An Easy and Cost-Free Way to Help All Saints In Its Mission: eScrip

Maxine Sitts

With no effort or expense on your part, you can help All Saints build its Neighborhood Center, help feed our community, and fulfill its mission of doing God’s work in the world!

If you already have signed up for eScrip, then be sure to renew your participation when eScrip contacts you by email or in the mail. If you haven’t signed up, then please do so. It’s all done on the web, and we can help you if needed. To enroll, go to www.escrip.com/.

Many All Saints folks have been enrolled for years, benefitting All Saints with close to \$1,000 just last year. If we enroll more folks, we can do so much more!

For help in enrolling, please contact John Trubina, Tom Breckenridge, or Maxine Sitts.



Walk with Me (Monthly Update)

John Trubina

The office of the deacon is a sacramental office that reminds the Church and the world of the servant ministry of Christ. The servant ministry of the deacon in the liturgy reminds us of our call to proclaim the Good News by word and example and to serve others in Christ's name.

Peace be with you.

I attended the Deacons Yearly Retreat at Bishop's Ranch January 2–4. It was one of the most inspiring events that have taken place in some time for me. The main focus of this retreat was spiritual direction, prayer and discernment for Holy Orders to the Diaconate. I have come to realize my calling to serve God and His people has become much stronger and more meaningful.

My classes this year include Homiletics, Intro to Theological Reflection, Prayer Book Studies II, Foundations of Social Ministry and Bible Studies II.

I am one of three Aspirants from the Diocese of California who are being interviewed for entrance into the Postulancy in the seminary. We have had our preliminary one-on-one interview with a member of the Commission on the Ordained, in which we discussed our calling, and for all three of us it was a wonderful event. Our next step is an interview with Bishop Marc in February, and then in March we will head to the Vocations Conference, in which we will meet individually with each of the 12 standing committee members. I am excited to see this process unfold. I wish to thank Fr. Rob, my Vocations Committee, and all of you who are supporting me through your prayers and encouragement.

I attended my first meeting with An Episcopal Ministries to Convalescent Hospitals (AEMCH) and was selected to sit on the board of directors. The mission of AEMCH is to provide a supportive presence to East Bay facility residents, their caregivers, and their families. AEMCH members visit residents and organize worship opportunities for them, hold educational workshops, offer training classes for volunteers, and thus promote individual and congregational ministries.

As always, if you would like to learn more about the Diaconate, please come and speak with me. Our next community dinner is scheduled for May 9 at the School for Deacons in Berkeley. If you wish to attend as my guest, please drop me a line or call me.

In Christ's service,
John

Communication at All Saints: Active Listening

Maxine Sitts

Last month, we explored how we can communicate more effectively in email. This month we look at the most important part of communication: active listening!

It's an unnatural act for many of us (certainly for me). But if we truly feel called to do God's work at All Saints, this is a skill that's essential. We work in groups—both formal and informal. Nearly all the time, more than one person is involved in making things happen, whether it's at a vestry meeting or a quick check-in with parishioners after Sunday services.

Here is a great article from the Web. Perhaps we can help each other grow to become active listeners—and see our ministry grow even more in our beloved community.

Five Key Elements of Active Listening

1. Pay attention.

Give the speaker your undivided attention and acknowledge the message. Recognize that what is not said also speaks loudly.

- Look at the speaker directly.
- Put aside distracting thoughts. Don't mentally prepare a rebuttal!
- "Listen" to the speaker's body language.
- Refrain from side conversations when listening in a group setting.

2. Show that you are listening.

Use your own body language and gestures to convey your attention.

3. Provide feedback.

As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. This may require you to reflect what is being said and ask questions.

- Reflect what has been said by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is . . ." and "Sounds like you are saying . . ." are great ways to reflect back.
- Ask questions to clarify certain points. "What do you mean when you say..." "Is this what you mean?"

4. Defer judgment.

Interrupting is a waste of time. It frustrates the speaker and limits your understanding of the message.

(Continues)

5. Respond Appropriately.

Active listening is a model for respect and understanding. You are gaining information and perspective. You add nothing by attacking the speaker or otherwise putting him or her down.

- Assert your opinions respectfully.
- Treat the other person as he or she would want to be treated.

Watch for more communication tips next month. Let me know if you have a topic you'd like to explore!

Altar Guild

Nicola Peck, Altar Guild Coordinator

Altar guilds today are groups of men and women who are called to serve God by preparing and tending the places where Episcopalians worship.

If any parishioner feels called to become involved in this wonderful service to God and our All Saints community, please talk to Fr. Rob or Nicola Peck.

The job involves, about **one weekend a month**,

- An hour on Saturday morning with another member, and
- 20 to 30 minutes after the 10:00 service on Sunday.

Members choose the weekend they are available, so this is a very flexible commitment. You would have ample time to learn before being expected to perform your duties alone.

Spirit of Song

Mary Nelson



Do you like music and liturgy?

Do you attend Sunday services regularly?

Think you might enjoy spending time with a small group of lovable eccentrics?

Then the choir could be for you! Sit in on a rehearsal before you make up your mind—Wednesdays at 7 p.m. (except for February 4). Talk to Dylan Snodgrass if you're interested.

Around the City

Diana Souza, San Leandro City Council Member and Member of All Saints

City Council News

Starting January 15, 2009, no alcohol is allowed in any park in San Leandro. The Council approved the ban after hearing from the Recreation and Park Commission, Recreation staff, and Police Department. Should you observe anyone consuming alcohol in our parks, do not hesitate to contact the Police Department at 577-2740.

The City Council recently committed to a partial dredge of the Marina harbor next year and into the future. This will allow boats with drafts of three feet access to the Marina at least 60% of the time over the four-year dredging cycle. This means most power craft will still be able to use our launch ramp. We are still unsure of the future of the harbor, except that large boats and sailboats will not be able to dock there. The Shoreline Citizens Advisory Committee will be discussing various options. The Council decision gives guidelines to both the CAC and developer.

You probably have heard that the City Council elevated Steve Hollister from interim to full-time city manager. Steve has served as the assistant city manager under John Jermanis for many years, and previously served as city manager for cities in the Central Valley. This is an interesting time to be city manager, with a budget crisis and critically important city positions to be filled. As interim city manager, Steve has shown that he is up to the task.

Other Items of Interest

The Environmental Impact Report (ERI) for the Kaiser Permanente project will soon be released for a 45-day public comment period. As you recall, Kaiser is planning to build a state-of-the-art medical facility just west of Highway 880, at the old Albertson's warehouse site. Construction will likely begin in late 2009, starting with the six-story, 263-bed hospital and a separate hospital support building. Don't hesitate to review the ERI and submit your comments during the public comment period. For more information, visit www.ci.san-leandro.ca.us/newskaiserproj.html.

It will not be long before DHL is settled into its new home at the old Levitz site. They will only operate a warehouse and distribution operation out of the site, so will not need to apply for any conditional use permit. DHL has decided to secure a facility across the street for its trucking operations, which is properly zoned for that use. We anticipate they will be very good neighbors.

Our Police Department recently launched a new crime prevention and information website. The new site, www.slpdinfo.org, offers neighborhoods access to information on crimes committed in their area, the opportunity to sign up for "Crime Alert" information, and "Be on the Lookout" alerts regarding specific crimes.

San Leandro's budget woes continue. Unfortunately, the economic crisis in recent months has left the City facing a roughly \$8 million budget deficit. In the next month, the Council will be considering budget cuts and develop other ways for the City to tighten its belt while still providing quality services to the community.

Mark Your Calendars

February 2

Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Wednesday, February 4

Women's Spiritual Direction Circle—7:00 p.m.—rear nave

Saturday, February 7

Liturgy of the Steward—8:30 a.m. (come when you can)

Food Pantry—setup & lunch 11:00 to 1:00, food distribution 1:00 to 3:00

Sunday, February 8

2009 Annual Meeting Part II: Celebration of 2008 accomplishments, 2009 goals and budget, after short 10:00 service

Wednesday, February 11

Cooking for BFWC—1:00 to 3:00

February 13–15

Youth Snow Retreat—Senior High

Saturday, February 14

Sacred Circle Dance (beginners welcome)—7:30 to 9:30—Fireside Room

Sunday, February 15

April Showers, 11:00 to 2:00, San Leandro Boys and Girls Club

Saturday, February 21

Crab Feed

Wednesday, February 25

Ash Wednesday

Sunday, March 1

April Showers, 11:00 to 2:00, San Leandro Boys and Girls Club

Wednesday, March 4

Women's Spiritual Direction Circle—7:00 p.m.—rear nave

Saints Alive! is published monthly via email by All Saints Episcopal Church, 911 Dowling Boulevard, San Leandro, California 94577.

Submit news for the March 2009 issue to marypat56@comcast.net or mail to Mary Nelson in care of the church. Deadline is February 25.

For changes to the parish database, please email John Trubina at jtrubina@comcast.net or leave a message for him at the church.

For more information on All Saints' people and programs, please stop by the church or visit us on the Internet at www.saintsalive.net. God bless you!