



Saints Alive!

July 2008

A publication of All Saints Episcopal Parish in San Leandro, California
Go to the [parish website](#) for an online version of this and past newsletters

Saying Goodbye to Christ Bible

Fr. Rob Droste, Rector

Some of you will have heard by now that the vestry of All Saints decided unanimously on May 21 to end our space-use arrangement with Christ Bible Church effective September 1. I thought it was important to tell you why I asked the vestry to endorse this change.

First, the content of Christ Bible's teaching and preaching was generally incompatible with ours. They hold certain core beliefs (Biblical literalism, predestination, and atonement/wrathful God theology, among others) with which many, if not most, All Saints members would emphatically disagree. In offering our space to Christ Bible, we have tacitly endorsed their views.

For many years we were able to tolerate this situation. We support the right of people to think and believe what they choose. The fact that the donation they made for the space was a significant part of the budget clouded the issue. As we became dependent on that money, it became difficult to evaluate whether the arrangement was in the best interest of All Saints.

Then a member of Christ Bible began parking a large panel van outside our front doors on Dowling. This vehicle is painted with large, very bright interpretations of scripture that would fairly be described as abusive—if not terrifying. I addressed it with the pastor, recognizing the fact that it's a public street but stressing the incompatibility of the van's message with what we teach here at All Saints. However, the van continued to appear out front each week.

Again, the problem was not with the expression of speech. I take First Amendment protections seriously, and I know you do as well. The problem was that, right or wrong, the neighborhood did not make a distinction between Christ Bible and All Saints.

On several occasions, All Saints parents who volunteer at Roosevelt Elementary next door were confronted by other parents of pupils. We received phone calls and emails from neighbors about it, and our first visit from the new principal was to raise the concern. She mentioned later that Roosevelt parents were circulating a petition and a delegation was preparing to confront us on the issue. Clearly, the presence of Christ Bible had begun to hurt us—especially among the very families that we most want to attract to this parish.

At the same time, there has been a strong movement in the parish this last 18 months to change how our congregation is perceived here in the neighborhood. With the idea that we

are striving to become a “beloved neighborhood center,” we have begun examining the relationship of our facilities to our mission. The parish now has a clear intention of putting our building to use in ways that further our purpose and tasks—and Sunday afternoon and evening are prime time for offering ministry to the neighborhood.

We have already begun conversations with Roosevelt Elementary about putting together a homework club, perhaps with a Sunday night supper. And we’ve been discussing whether a Sunday night service—perhaps directed to the needs of the many Latino families in the Broadmoor neighborhood—might help us minister better to those closest to us. A great many ideas have been suggested, and that process of considering our highest and best uses for this resource with which God has entrusted us will continue full speed throughout the summer.

Of course, there are practical matters involved. The income from the arrangement with Christ Bible was important. The vestry and I are well aware that the income will need to be replaced. But there’s no going back. The days of letting anyone use our space whose presence contradicts our core beliefs are past us. With faith in our sense of mission and purpose, we will meet the practical demands we face. In fact, we’ll do much more than that. We’ll thrive.

Safe and Legal on the Fourth

Councilmembers Diana Souza and Joyce Starosciak

The City of San Leandro, the San Leandro Police Department, and the Alameda County Fire Department want to remind you that all fireworks are illegal in the City of San Leandro, including sparklers and fireworks called “Safe and Sane.” Here are a few of the many fireworks celebrations in the Bay Area (<http://sfbay.craigslist.org/eby/eve/725373059.html>):

- Jack London Square, Oakland
- Berkeley Marina
- Mountain View Shoreline Amphitheater (8 p.m., tickets required)
- Fishermen’s Wharf and Pier 39, San Francisco

No fireworks can be seen from the San Leandro Marina. If you see any fireworks in San Leandro, please call the San Leandro Police Department at 577-2740 immediately. Thank you!

Books for San Joaquin

Maxine Sitts

Many parishes in the Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin are growing. Our sister diocese is in need of the *Book of Common Prayer* and 1982 hymnals. If you know of a source for these books to be shared with parishes to the south, please contact Maxine Sitts at 510-632-6479 or sittsbreck@att.net.

Social Ministries

Tom Breckenridge

The biggest news is well known to most of you—the sparkling June 14 celebration and rededication. I offer my deep gratitude to the Social Ministries Team and to so many more parishioners for their amazing efforts. All Saints has been re-launched!

So, what's next? Over the coming months, the Social Ministries Team will be learning about how other food programs work. We'll be looking into cooperative, diocesan-wide options. There is much to learn, and we are fully energized. Click the Social Ministry link on the [parish website](#) to stay tuned.

Mark Your Calendars* *Social ministry events have green dates.

Saturday, July 5, Liturgy of the Steward—come make a difference!

8:30 Bagels, cream cheese, coffee, tea, and Morning Prayer
then . . . Fun and easy cleanups, repairs, and yardwork (your choice)
11:30 Eat Neighborhood Lunch

Saturday, July 5, Neighborhood Lunch, 11:00 to 1:00

Sunday, July 6, April Showers, 11:00 to 2:00, San Leandro Boys and Girls Club

Sunday, July 20, AIDS Walk: help Episcopalians have the largest representation of a religious group!

Sunday, July 20, April Showers, 11:00 to 2:00, San Leandro Boys and Girls Club

Tuesday, August 5, National Night Out: party with our neighbors!

Sara Miles Signing More Books for All Saints!

Maxine Sitts

The supply of *Take This Bread* by Sara Miles ran out at our June 14 celebration. More books have arrived, and Sara has graciously agreed to sign them for us. The books are \$20, with \$6 of that going to the Social Ministries feeding program.

Contact Maxine Sitts at sittsbreck@att.net or 510-632-6479 to let her know how many books you would like and how you would like them signed. *Take This Bread* is Sara's account of the growth of food pantries in the Bay Area, brought about by her spiritual experience in an Episcopal church.

Robin Report [excerpt from a letter]

Robin Niderost is an All Saints parishioner who has been working with Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans.

Hello All!

. . . I am continually amazed at what I see, hear and feel here. God is definitely at work in this place in oh so many ways. The physical work is something to see—just the change from last October to now, I can see that the rebuilding is going strong. If you were to visit New Orleans for the first time, there is still so much devastation to see, but, having been here, there are steps being made.

The people that take time out of their lives for days or weeks at a time are from all walks of life from all over our nation (as well as other nations!). They all come with the spirit of giving, healing, rebuilding—looking to make a difference. And the young people . . . are college kids that gave up their summer break to come here to learn new skills in order to lead teams of volunteers that will come over the summer—they all amaze me. Their commitment to such a cause leaves me lost for words. I think back to when I was their age and though I was fighting or protesting causes that were important to me at the time, I never committed a “chunk” of my life as these kids have.

And finally, the people of New Orleans. These people have hope and are very gracious. A day does not go by that I am not asked by a stranger—in the market, driving by the job site, a plumber or electrician, a neighbor, a server in a restaurant—they all ask where I'm from (I'm always a mess covered in paint, mud, dirt or something so they know I'm building something). When I tell them I'm from California, they look surprised, ask how long I am staying and then thank me. They thank me profusely and they thank me for all the people in New Orleans. And then, they thank God for sending me and others to help them and their city that they love.

God is here. And, God is good—all the time! . . .

Peace!

Robin

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

Submit news for the August 2008 issue to marypat56@comcast.net or mail to Mary Nelson in care of the church. Deadline is July 27.

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!