

# Saints Alive!



August 2008

A publication of All Saints Episcopal Parish in San Leandro, California

Go to the parish website, [www.saintsalive.net](http://www.saintsalive.net), for an on-line versions of this and past newsletters

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## Looking Backward—and Forward

*Jeanne Cochran, Senior Warden*

With all the changes we've been experiencing lately, in building appearance and ministry focus, I began looking back over the last 36 years since I first came to All Saints in 1972. I realized I've been witness to and participant in unbelievable change during that time in almost all aspects of parish life.

In the beginning of those years, I (and a few others) can recall a large congregation, with a packed church on Christmas and Easter, well-filled pews other Sundays, and over 200 on the mailing list. We were a tightly run ship under the direction of a decidedly conservative rector who was strongly against women in the priesthood, the "new" prayer book of 1979, Rite II, and the revised hymnal of 1982. Our reason for existence as a parish was basically to take care of our own parishioners, and I cannot remember the terms "ministry" or "vision" ever being spoken. We had an active Brotherhood of St. Andrew, Episcopal Church Women, and several women's guilds, with a yearly bazaar and an active parish social life with frequent potlucks and parties.

Gradually, membership and attendance fell off, and there was a lot of dissatisfaction and dissention. Following the rector's retirement in 1986, our interim priest gave the congregation some much-needed education on such things as church history and the reasons behind the prayerbook changes. It was a calming year, and I would describe our new rector as a "relaxed" leader, with more liberal views, who left much of the running of the parish's business and activities in the hands of the vestry and parish members.

The parish became more active and aware of what was happening in the diocese and the national church, and we became active in AEMCH, An Episcopal Ministry to Convalescent Hospitals. However, our ministry outside the church was seen to depend more on our personal actions living as Christians, not as a function of the church. Then in the late '90s Tom Breckenridge arrived and began nudging us into new views of ministry, beginning with April Showers.

Over the intervening years our membership, like that of most other main-line churches, had continued to decline. Maintaining our reserves was of prime importance, and for years maintenance was done on an as-needed (or emergency) basis, resulting in the need for the extensive work we are currently undertaking, and I would describe our general attitude and outlook as being discouraged, as we were trying to “just hold it together.”

Which brings us to the last few years, when Fr. Rob was called to lead All Saints.

As he has grown into his ministry, he has led us to grow into our own. We are now an outward-looking church rather than an inward one, facing the future with hope and optimism, developing more plans for service to others, increasing educational opportunities for young and old, more accepting of change and differing points of view, and regularly attracting new members.

As we have undertaken our building repair and renovation, God has given us a majority of vestry members knowledgeable on construction and project management, and the parish has responded with their wholehearted personal and financial support. I give thanks that All Saints is truly a different parish than the one I first knew—in appearance, responsibility, and ministry.

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## Social Ministries

*Tom Breckenridge*

There’s nothing like spending a day with 25,000 energized, dedicated people to lift your spirits. Seven All Saints parishioners spent Sunday, July 20, in Golden Gate Park and helped raise \$4.5 million to fight a killer. The All Saints Seven joined a group of about 150 registered walkers from the Diocese of California. Many thanks to all who supported this wonderful event by walking, hosting, pledging and praying.

## National Night Out—Tuesday, August 5

Come join the party! Get to know our neighbors! All Saints will once again host a block party in conjunction with National Night Out, a national effort to prevent crime by connecting with your neighbors, from 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday. There will be a barbeque as well as potluck salads and desserts. There will be games (including cut-throat ping pong), music, visits by police and fire department personnel, chatting with neighbors, and—of course—fabulous food.

Check out the flyer on our website. You can sign up on the sheet in the narthex—but most importantly, fix up some food to share and come join the party!

## Are Our Saints Alive? Ugandan Ministry Needs Us

*Barbara Bawden*

Since the April 2003 issue of *Saints Alive*, we have been able to send \$200 each month to help support, buy medicine, and pay for school for the orphans of AIDS victims that the Kamanyire family adopted. Most of the 32 who pledged at our first meeting at church gave only \$5 per month, but others gave when they could, and some gave much more. We can be proud of our gifts. They enabled the retired Bishop of Uganda and his wife, Irene, to increase their family of 10 orphans to 50 (in 2004) when they were able to build Sunrise House, a hand-built dormitory. With the help of Anne Harris and her son Sam Crump's church and Rotary Club donations, they have more land for a garden to raise food and graze milk cows, with pens for poultry.

The need grows, and Eustace and Irene Kamanyire are now in their seventies. (The Bishop receives only \$62 per month, paid twice per year, in retirement.) Without the help of our members and others like us, they could not survive. Please keep this ministry alive and find some amount to give each month again.

Find the envelopes for your gift in the narthex, the ones with African animal stickers on them. Make checks out to All Saints Church and mark them for African Ministry! No amount is too small!

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## Building Use Planning Meeting

On Wednesday, August 13, at 7:00 p.m., vestry members and Fr. Rob will host a discussion on possible additional uses of our building. Everyone is invited to share ideas and concerns. If you are unable to attend but want to be part of the process, please call Jeanne Cochran or Fr. Rob with your suggestions. Jeanne can be reached at 885-1810.

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## Eucharistic Minister Training This Month

*John Trubina*

If you are interested in becoming a Eucharistic Minister at the altar or becoming a Eucharistic Minister Visitor (visiting those who cannot attend services), please let me know at your earliest convenience.

The next training will take place August 23 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) at St. Mark's in Palo Alto. This will mark the debut of an entirely new diocesan training program for Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors.

## Education for Ministry

It's back-to-school time, and school is not just for the kids! With fall fast approaching, it's time for Education for Ministry (EFM) to start a new year. We have four returning students and would like to invite you to join the group. We need two additional students to continue EFM at All Saints. Confirmation is needed from all six students by the end of August to prepare for the registration process in early September.

If you would like more information about the program, feel free to talk with Fr. Rob or some of our graduates: Karen Taylor, Mary Kincaid, Donna Lack, Jean Saastamoinen, Jeanne Cochran, Liz Berg, or Kathleen Waters. It's a wonderful and enriching experience!

For registration please contact Kathleen Waters.

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## IHN Makes News with Gift Card Initiative

*Martin Ricard, "Homeless get help through gift card program," Daily Review, July 28, 2008*

SAN LEANDRO—Gift cards can be used for all sorts of things these days—buying new clothes, paying for a meal at a restaurant, getting gasoline. And if the balance on the card is less than \$10, Californians can now redeem it for cash, thanks to state Sen. Ellen Corbett's bill that went into effect last year. . . .

But if you're like many people who let their balances languish and go to waste, the folks who operate the April Showers program have another idea for all those plastic gift certificates: helping the homeless. "Instead of forgetting about it, you can keep giving that gift by putting it over to April Showers," said Tom Breckenridge, a board member for the Interfaith Homelessness Network, "and we'd be happy to put it to good use . . . ."

The homelessness organization recently launched the initiative after hearing about Corbett's bill, SB 250, and that as much as \$8.2 billion was left unspent on gift cards across the country in 2006. Gene Bass, the organization's treasurer, suggested the idea that perhaps people who received gift cards because of someone else's generosity might find it in their hearts to continue that cycle of generosity by passing on the unused balance to a homeless person in need. . . .

Every first, third and fifth Sunday, the IHN invites people to the San Leandro Boys and Girls Club for a meal, a hot shower—and clothes, if they need them. Some of the items always in heavy demand are men's underwear and socks. Bass said the gift cards could be used to buy these for their guests, for example. . . .

A few dollars and some change might not be enough to buy much anymore, but when put toward a good cause those small contributions can go a long way for someone who really needs help, Bass said.

For more information about April Showers, visit [www.ihnnaprilshowers.org](http://www.ihnnaprilshowers.org). To send a gift card to the organization, mail it to: IHN, P.O. Box 414, San Leandro, CA 94577.

## He Is Not Alone

**Tony Hammons, December 27, 1952–June 23, 2008**

*Tom Breckenridge*

Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes, and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Excerpt from Matthew 25:31–45

More than 60 people prayed together the afternoon of July 13, 2008, in Bethel Community Church, celebrating the life of Tony Hammons. All Saints parishioners joined folks from other San Leandro churches and guests of April Showers (a program of the Interfaith Homelessness Network—IHN) to give thanks for Tony, who died June 23, 2008, alone and quietly in an outdoor location in San Leandro. But Tony was not alone during his life with us. He helped set up and operate April Showers. He provided food and comfort to others on the streets during the week. Testimonies from his friends pointed out his giving, cheerful nature.

He always saw the glass as half full.

If you needed a sandwich and he had two, he'd give you both of them.

He was a true friend to me.

Then the people at the celebration of Tony's life proclaimed together:

Then the righteous will answer him,

Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?

The King will reply,

I tell you the truth, whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.

Thanks go to Pastor Sarah Reyes at Bethel and to Dina Herrera, a member of Bethel and Tony's friend, and to others from Bethel who helped shape the celebration: Tyler Yarbrough, Lila Williams, Pastor Barbara Barkley, and Noel Moritz. The celebration concluded with a huge feast provided by Bethel and IHN volunteers.

Thank you to the people of All Saints who support April Showers with their time, supplies, and donations. The IHN provides so much more than showers, food, and clothing. In our community, we are doing what Jesus has called all of us to do: show compassion. To find out more, contact Tom Breckenridge, [tom.breckenridge@gmail.com](mailto:tom.breckenridge@gmail.com).

# Neighborhood Center Progress Report

Jack Kincaid, Facilities Care Committee, July 26



Amber Flooring has completed their beautiful work on the chancel oak floors.

The painters started the actual painting July 24. and it looks really good. They will be here for several more days, painting and cleaning up. They will paint the three sets of double doors and the single door from the parking lot with red; all the other doors will be the base wall color with the lighter trim color.

Lopez Roofing will be here next Tuesday to put the flashing cap on the new fascia on the gable roof next to the red door to the parking lot. Rob's Painting, who have been very accommodating, will come back and paint the flashing. Lopez will inspect the deteriorating roof ridge cap shingles and give us an estimate.

Thanks to Ken Wright for volunteering to come and help with the broken sacristy window. We have a plastic replacement "glass" ready to install. We are still searching for a garden shed to fit the available 4- by 12-foot space by the scullery door.

The "kitchen task force" will be meeting soon to get everyone's input on the kitchen renewal. We have most of the cash and pledges needed to modernize the kitchen that has fed so many people for so many years. Thank goodness that the existing stove is in fine condition and only needs a good cleaning. That probably would have been the largest single expense item.

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

**Saturday, August 2**, 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, August 2**, Neighborhood Lunch, 11:00 to 1:00

**Sunday, August 3**, April Showers, 11:00 to 2:00, San Leandro Boys and Girls Club

**Tuesday, August 5**, Block Party (National Night Out), 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.  
Get to know our neighbors!



**Wednesday, August 13**, Building Use Planning, 7:00—all parishioners

**Saturday, September 20**, Required half-day training for cup bearers, lectors, ushers, and sacristans

More information to be mailed to you over the next month. (Rebuilding Acolyte Program at All Saints—more information and training coming soon!)

## Building Fund Progress Report

*Maxine Sitts, Building Plan Communications*

The Neighborhood Center at All Saints moves onward, with a growing number of supporters, some pledging over three to five years, some giving one-time gifts, and many spending hours repairing, shining, moving, building, and painting on “Steward Saturdays.”

Due in part to the June 14 rededication and celebration, the monies for the Building Fund received in June reached \$27,812. This included a one-time gift of \$10,000. We will be updating our list of donors in August.

Of course, at the same time, we are writing checks to construction companies, painters, gutter installers, wood repairers, and so forth. The vestry also has decided to accelerate pay-back of our loan from the diocese to reduce interest charges. At this point, outgoing funds are exceeding incoming funds.

What does all this mean?

First and foremost, the progress and the growing support from a larger community strongly indicate that we are doing the right thing—providing a neighborhood center where we can live out our mission and ministry.

Second, we need to step-up financial support, as well as prayers and volunteer assistance. We are grateful for each and every financial gift, which range from \$10 to tens of thousands. But most of all, we are grateful for the blessings we receive and for the ministry we provide to our growing community.

God is indeed good! All the time.

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## We Welcome Pat Taff!

Pat describes herself as a “born Episcopalian,” having been baptized and confirmed at Christ Church Alameda, where she attended for many years. However, there came a time in her life when her responsibilities caused her to stop attending church. She was working at General Motors, commuting some distance, and caring for her elderly mother and also her sister, who had lost her husband and been injured in an automobile accident. The younger of Pat’s two nephews also lived with her for a year.

Pat retired in 1985, after 32 years with GM, but got bored and for 13 years went to work a couple of days a week as a substitute secretary for the San Lorenzo School District. She had earlier tired of her commutes, and moved to a mobile home park in San Lorenzo in 1979. The owners of the park asked her to work for them as a receptionist and substitute

manager, on a part-time basis, which she has been doing ever since; she has edited their newsletter for 10 years.

The park has a residents' association in which she has been active, serving as president of their board three times, and organizing and running large social events and dinners. She has also been active in other organizations, especially the Beta Sigma Phi, serving on both chapters and council.

Earlier this year Pat wanted to return to church, and found St. Christopher's. However, with the small congregation, she found it was not meeting her needs, and she began attending All Saints several months ago. She has been regularly attending the 10 o'clock service, is faithfully helping with the monthly Soup Stop preparation, and was bringing her friend Sandy Smith on Sundays until Sandy had her knee replacement surgery. She is a willing participant wherever needed, and helped with the last April Showers mailing.

She has agreed to serve as an oblations bearer and greeter.

Pat has found the people at All Saints very friendly, thinks highly of Fr. Rob, and feels she has found her new church home here. We are very happy she is with us, and will certainly make use of her many capabilities.

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## Channeling the Spirit in Song

A new choir will be launched in September. We intend to have fun! Commitment and team spirit are essentials. Talk to Dylan Snodgrass if you're curious.

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

*Submit news for the September 2008 issue to marypat56@comcast.net or mail to Mary Nelson in care of the church. Deadline is August 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](http://www.saintsalive.net). God bless you!*