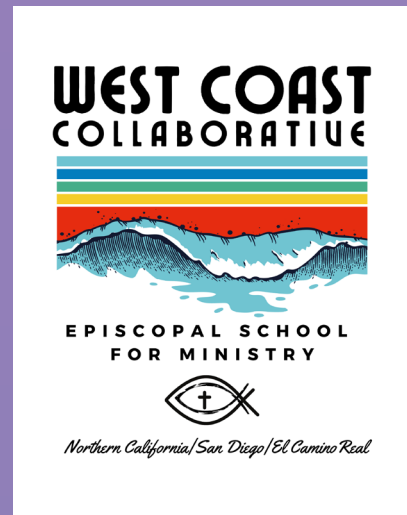


# REAL EPISCOPAL

Magazine Winter 2022

## NEW CHURCH

## SCHOOL FOR MINISTRY



## OUTSIDE

## COMMUNITY TRAILBLAZER



## THE WALLS

## COMMUNITY GARDENS AND SERVICES



# Contents



The offices of the Diocese of El Camino Real have been at Sargent House in Salinas since 2015. Photo by Elrond Lawrence



## Real Episcopal

*A biannual publication of the Diocese of El Camino Real*

**Publisher** The Rt Rev. Lucinda Ashby

**Editor/Writer/Photographer** Carole Bartolini

**Thanks to:** Kirstin Nielsen, the Rev. Katherine Doar, Joyce Wing, the Rev. Shelley Denney, Ellen Lukanc, Nancy Romer, Aer van de Water, Joan Dresser, and the Rev. Jen Crompton

*Above: The logo for the Diocese of El Camino Real was redesigned this year to include the shape of a scallop. This design echos the scallop in Bishop Lucinda's vestments symbolizing both pilgrimage and baptism*

---

**03** ■ **The West Coast Collaborative**

---

**05** ■ **The Church has Left the Building**

---

**07** ■ **How to Leave a Real Legacy**

---

---

**08** ■ **The Path through the Garden to Faith**

---

**09** ■ **Dinner (and more) at St. George's**

---

**11** ■ **Update from the Trail**

---



Dear Beloved of El Camino Real,

It is a pleasure to invite you to peruse the pages of our Winter Edition of the Real Episcopal Magazine. The theme for this edition, "Outside the Walls," was based on the enthusiasm and reflection of our Deacon's Day this Fall.

In this magazine, you will find an update on our School for Ministry, now called the West Coast Collaborative. With our two sister dioceses, San Diego and Northern California, we plan to expand our program in 2023 to open the Diaconal Formation program. Additionally, Jen Crompton, our Community Trailblazer, provides a snapshot of discoveries and adventures with Cal Poly Canterbury and St. Benedict's, Los Osos.

Please take a look at some of the exciting and innovative projects that are underway to expand the community impact of our Episcopal Church here in El Camino Real. St. George's, Salinas meets its community with food in their parking lot. St. Stephen's-in-the-Field, San Jose, has developed a community garden—and you will read the story of Aer van de Water and how the path through the garden lead Aer into the church. The Episcopal Church of Almaden is stepping boldly into their future with a grant from Trinity Wall Street to build the Church of the Future, both with facilities and community connections.

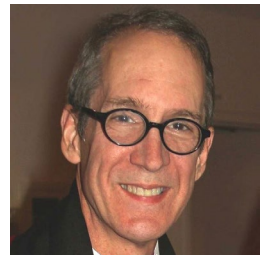
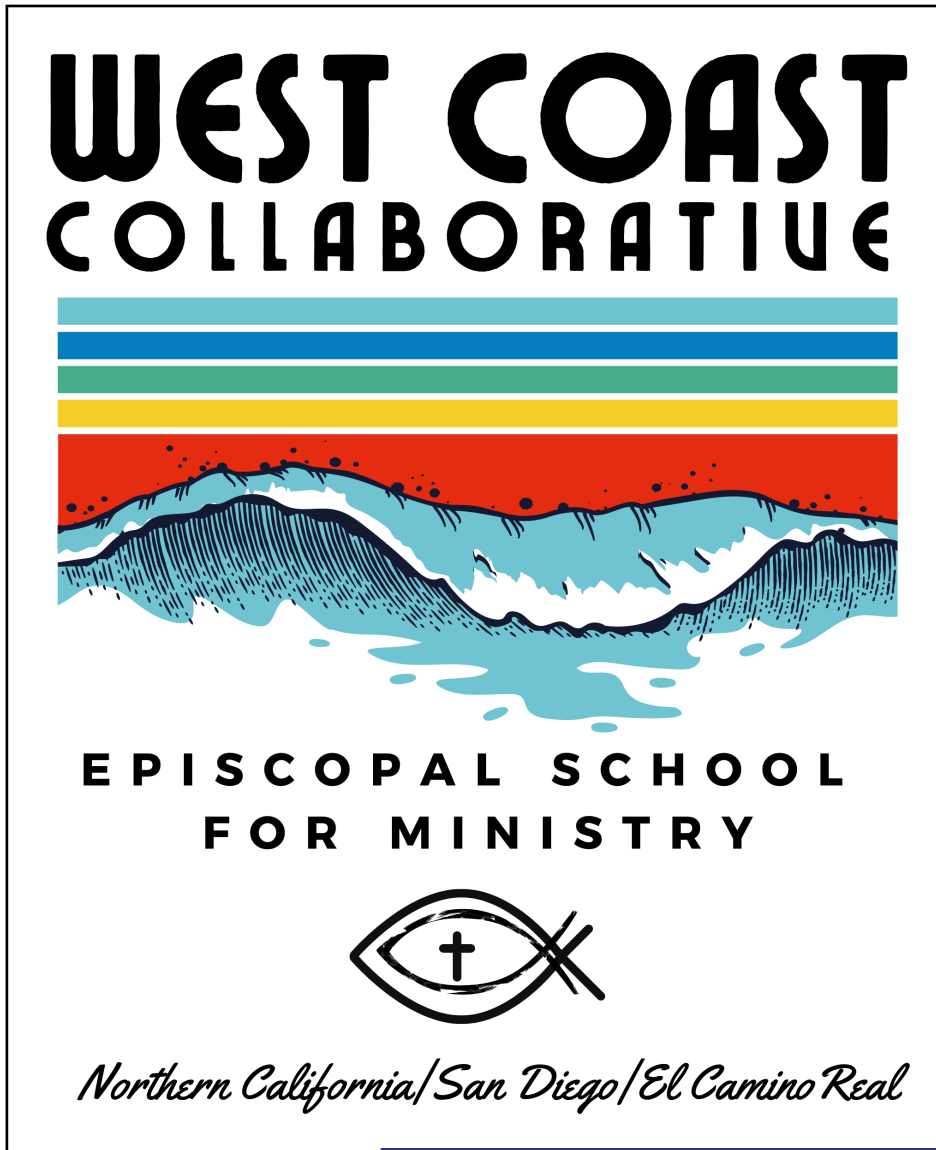
Read all about it!

And, thank you to Carole Bartolini who has researched these stories for the past four months, and to those who met with her so that she could share their stories with you.

*Lucinda Ashby*







*Above: The logo design for the West Coast Collaborative Episcopal School for Ministry.*

# The School For Ministry Expands!

**Through a partnership with the Diocese of San Diego and the Diocese of Northern California, the West Coast Collaborative is born.**

*Left: the Rev. Sr. Kathy Lawler, OEF, Dean for Northern California; the Rt. Rev. Jim Mathes, Dean for San Diego and the Rev. Katherine Doar, Dean for El Camino Real.*

The current cohort of the School for Ministry in the Diocese of El Camino Real is winding down and will have their final retreat in January. This first successful year will lead into the expansion of our School for Ministry as we join with the Diocese of Northern California and the Diocese of San Diego to form the West Coast Collaborative Episcopal School for Ministry in 2023. Our own Dean Katherine B. Doar will be joined by the Rt. Rev. Jim Mathes as the Dean for San Diego and the Rev. Sr. Kathy Lawler, OEF as the Dean for Northern California. The Rev. Filemon Diaz, the Rev. Susan Arnold, and the Rev. Katherine Doar will continue their work as mentors for the students.

The Diocese of San Diego already had an established School for Ministry, but it was based on a more traditional model of in-person instruction. With the COVID pandemic, they were forced to be more flexible and find other ways to reach their students. The Diocese of Northern California was working on a more local diaconal formation model due to their territory being largely rural. Our School for Ministry was already designed to be online for our English Cohort, so that was a good starting point for expanding to cover a broader territory.

The new West Coast Collaborative program integrates content from the Iona Collaborative to provide video lectures and structure to the curriculum. The program is designed to have a flipped pedagogy where lectures and traditionally instructor lead activities are done as homework and the practice examples and discussion happen in the class sessions. The English cohort of the program is intended to be entirely online. The Spanish cohort will have in-person instruction due to limited access to technology and the fact that most of the Spanish language students are in the same locations.

The first cohort of the West Coast Collaborative will begin in January of 2023 with orientation and classes beginning in February. There will be a Lay Preaching program in English and Spanish which all students will attend. The students in the two-year diaconal program will have a separate cohort focused specifically on diaconal work. The class size is limited to 12 students per cohort which is optimal for small group work. Your generous support has made this collaboration possible. The Diocese of El Camino Real is growing outreach and formation through partnerships like these. Ω

# The Church has left the building

**How The Episcopal Church in Almaden is changing to support its community.**

The tagline in the title was first created by former ECA Rector, the Rev. Kate Flexor when she realized that church would need to change to grow into the modern world. That idea has continued and been championed by a jointly lead team with three goals: 1. Share underused property, 2. Engage more deeply in service to neighbors, 3. Create a sustainable income stream for Joint Venture Churches of Almaden Valley, The Episcopal Church in Almaden (ECA) and the Congregational Church of Almaden Valley, United Church of Christ (CCAV, UCC)

The team striving to reach these goals is made up of the Rev. Shelley Denney; Nancy Romer, Sr. Warden; Ellen Lukanc, Jr. Warden and property planning lead; and Joyce Wing, former Sr. Warden and project coordinator for Church of the Future, plus five more from ECA and six from CCAV, UCC. Some parishioners have expressed concern about the program's future since the Rev. Shelley is retiring at the end of 2022, but this has been a lay lead endeavor from the beginning and will continue to be so. Nancy, Ellen and Joyce are confident that they have everything they need going forward. The Rev. Shelley's parting gift to ECA was her hard work applying for and winning the Mission Real Estate Development grant from Trinity Church Wall Street. This grant funding will complete a financial feasibility study that will help support reimagining the whole church campus to make it sharable for worship and community.

The first step to reaching their goals started four years ago when members of ECA went out door to door in the surrounding community and asked their neighbors what ECA could do to support them. In addition, they interviewed school and community leaders, and elected officials. Most of what they heard was people who were lonely and looking





Above: Aerial view of the Joint Venture property.

Below: The team often meets via Zoom.

**Top row left to right**

Susanne Moore, ECA  
 Joyce Wing, ECA  
 Nancy Romer, ECA  
 George Romer, ECA

**Middle Row left to right**

Jan Blake, CCAV, UCC  
 Debbie Bemis, CCAV, UCC  
 Ellan Lukanc, ECA  
 Connie Moore, CCAV, UCC

**Bottom Row left to right**

Jerry Ferguson, ECA  
 Susie Ferguson, ECA

**Not Present for Photo:**

The Rev. Shelley Denney, ECA  
 Pastor Shelly Wilson, CCAV, UCC  
 Tom Gerber, CCAV, UCC  
 Kelly Yamanishi, CCAV, UCC

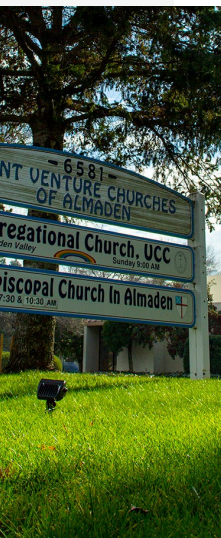


for community, people who needed childcare or eldercare. One of the partnerships resulting from that research is with Hearts and Minds Activity Center. This non-profit provides intergenerational programs for daycare and eldercare. It is one of the largest Alzheimer's and dementia care centers in San Jose.

Maria Nicolacoudis, CEO of Hearts and Minds said partnering with ECA was a perfect match because they already have a volunteer base and a knowledge of effective outreach. "What you already have in place is community," said Nicolacoudis.

These burgeoning outreach programs have brought life into the congregation at ECA and Joyce says she has heard multiple times that people who were searching for a church home stayed at ECA because of the feeling of hope embodied by the community. The team will continue to seek new partnerships to grow and fill the needs of the area. The hope is that by following Jesus out into the neighborhood the community at ECA will continue to grow. Ellen says the programs are like "ripples in a pond – you don't know what will be affected by them." Ω

The Joint Venture Church sign at ECA



## Leave a Real Legacy: Help build the emerging church

Is the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of El Camino Real enriching your life? Do you want to make a difference in advancing the Jesus Movement and help develop the emerging church in our diocese? How many times have you said, "I wish I could do more" to support work you believe in?

Legacy gifts provide an opportunity to designate a more significant future gift than might be possible through your annual contributions. Consider making a Real Legacy commitment to the Diocese. Common approaches include:

*Bequests:* Designate a percentage of your estate after making provisions for family and friends; leave a specified sum of money; or leave a particular piece of property.

*Beneficiary Designations:* Name the diocese as one of the beneficiaries of your retirement fund or life insurance policy.

During your lifetime, you can make qualified charitable distributions (QCD) from your IRA directly to the diocese if you are at least 70½ years old. Please discuss with a qualified financial advisor.

If you choose to designate a legacy gift, or if you already have done so, please inform the diocese of your plans. We would like to include and recognize you, if agreeable, as a member of our Real Legacy society to help inspire others.

For questions please contact Kirstin Nielsen, Bishop's Assistant & Diocesan Coordinator, at [kirstin@realepiscopal.org](mailto:kirstin@realepiscopal.org) or 831-394-4465.

### **Making IRA qualified charitable distributions**

Please remember that there is a tax benefit to making charitable contributions directly from your IRA account if you are 72 years old (or 70½ if you reached 70½ before January 2020). Your qualified charitable distributions can satisfy all or part of the amount of your required minimum distribution from your IRA, without being taxable to you.

For more information, visit [www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/retirement-plans-faqs-regarding-iras-distributions-withdrawals](https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/retirement-plans-faqs-regarding-iras-distributions-withdrawals).

## The Path Thro

At St. Stephen's-in-the-Field, San Jose there is a community garden adjoining the campus. Gardeners can rent a garden bed with a dedicated water spigot and access to a well-maintained seed library, tool shed, and support from volunteers and members of the congregation. Garden leader, Jessica Dickinson Goodman, has worked hard to make it a welcoming and open space to the surrounding community.

Jessica has found that working in the garden often opens people up to have conversations about faith that might not happen in another setting. People ask about God and the Episcopal Church while spreading mulch, hammering nails, or painting an arbor.

Aer van de Water was one such person who found their way back to the church through the garden. Aer answered some questions to help tell the story of finding faith again through the gardens at St. Stephen's-in-the-Field.

*Q: How did you get introduced to the community gardens at St. Stephen's?*

*A:* In 2019 I was seeking a church who would accept me unconditionally. Coming out meant I lost many friends, I was excluded from two-thirds of my professional network. But to live, to thrive, I needed to believe God loved me, that I could love myself, that I could love others as myself, so I left my faith community

I found that spiritual healing in my new writing friends, dancing and seeking out



# ough the Garden to Faith

the local like minded community. A friend I made through writing, Jessica Dickinson Goodman, was herself returning to the Episcopal church, and a community organizer with a gift for transformative justice. She invited me to come build up the community garden on the property of St. Stephen's-in-the-Field. So I learned to ground my dysphoria with every wheelbarrow of mulch I spread. I breathed the fresh air as I healed from chronic pain, fatigue, and despair.

*Q: How do you most experience God in the garden?*

A: My strongest connection is with God the creator. I met God when I picked up stones from a deceased collector's backyard during my freecycling for garden materials. I met Jack Roach, who invited me to the radically inclusive Agape group in the Diocese of El Camino Real, while making mud and installing poles. I rejoiced in the richness of God's creation every time I learned of a new California native plant. I have rediscovered God's peace in planning a sheltered bower for introverts and beneath the Coast Live Oak I dubbed "Hope". Pastor Salying and several members of Saint Thomas' go birding to marvel at God's creation, some do astronomy. Many are also gardeners.

Gardening has become my weekly meditation. I pray with the work of my hands when I grieve for the environment or when it seems like there is no hope and no justice for the marginalized. We can plant milkweeds for monarch butterflies, just as we can bring about the kingdom of heaven for humans on earth.

*Q: How have you grown with the community and explored your faith?*

A: I was received into the Episcopal Church at St Thomas' on October 23 by Bishop Lucinda (see photo). I har-

vested several aloe shoots when I pruned on the St Thomas campus. Some of those aloes have been adopted by folks I met in the community. With one of them, I'm currently building a Little Library for the St. Stephen's-in-the-Field campus. Thus, I experience God's blessing, and my faith and queer communities are braided back together as I take care of a little corner of creation. Ω



# Dinner (and more) at St. George's, Salinas

## Nourishing the body and soul.

Parish administrator and force of nature Joan Dresser has been working tirelessly to engage with the community around St. George's Church in north Salinas. Before the COVID Pandemic shutdown, she had a successful after school program called *On Your Way Back!*. Joan noticed that students leaving the nearby high school would often cross the parking lot on their way back to an empty home, a car, a tent, or shelter. She wanted to offer them a place to hang out after school to have a snack, a hot meal, and warm comfort. Volunteers offer tutoring, homework assistance, board games, contests, and a person or two to talk to while delaying that walk back to



*Right: St. George's Vounteers and Parisioners the Rev. Jim Ezell, Lynn Ezell and Vicky Fischer, enjoy Pozole and company in the St. George's parking lot.*

*Below: Joan Dresser with the Food Bank of Monterey County Food Truck in the background.*



wherever home is. With the Rev. Jim Collins' blessing, Joan began inviting the kids into the parish hall. "At our peak," says Joan, "we had 155 students come across the road to St. George's Parish Hall. "

The COVID lockdown in March of 2020 put that program on pause, but Joan kept looking for ways to reach out. Earlier this year she set up a partnership with the Food Bank for Monterey County to offer a community meal. About once a month a food truck would come to the parking lot behind St. George's and offer free dinner for anyone who came by .

Real Episcopal visited St. George's for the most recent event held on October 18th. The menu that evening included a delicious main course of green pozole with fresh onion, cabbage, and lemon; accompanied by tortilla chips, and fresh crushed strawberry or pineapple juice. The Rev. Jim





Ezell and the volunteers on site, Richard Smith, Pete Wagley, Hank Hill, and Lynn Fisher, set up tables and welcomed curious passersby. North Salinas High School has also sent over students to help set up, as they seek the required Community Service Hours towards graduation.

Many guests came for dinner after they saw the signs around the neighborhood. They were genuinely touched that the meal was free and that they were welcomed to take some home for their families! Joan is hoping to get the word out to more people before the next occasion by coordinating with the nearby high school staff and student programs in north Salinas.

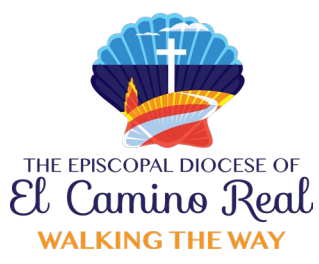
The next event in the works is the Youth Group

Food Pantry Distribution Day with the Monterey County Food Bank. St George's applied for a grant thru Salinas Valley Recycles and ReGen Monterey, in collaboration with Blue Strike Environmental, for funding for the 2022 – 2023 SB1383 Edible Food Recovery Grant Program, to improve their existing refrigeration and freezer appliances as well as increase food storage capacity to serve even more families in their community. St. George's won the grant and Joan was invited to speak at Salinas Valley Recyclables Board Meeting and ReGen Monterey's Board Meeting to hear more about the Youth Group Food Pantry and how it ties in with *On Your Way Back!*

At St. George's, people will find one way to God is through their stomachs! Ω



Presorted Standard  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 164  
Salinas, CA



**PO Box 689**  
**Salinas, CA 93902**  
[www.realepiscopal.org](http://www.realepiscopal.org)



## Update from the Trail

The work with St. Benedict's is quite rewarding as my Discovery team and I have begun digging into the heart of our work together. I reported at the convention about our adventure to Oktoberfest, supported by many congregation members, as we work to try and take what we are doing inside the church's walls out into the world. As a group, we are asking questions like: Who are our neighbors? How can we connect with them and be open to their needs? The only way to answer these questions is to get out and ask.

Our next adventure outside the walls will be an Advent pop-up coffee and prayer spot where folks can take a prayerful pause during the rush of the weeks leading up to Christmas. My work as the Trailblazer at St. Benedicts and the Campus ministry has been focused on relationship building, connecting to the community's passions, and walking alongside folks as we turn our passions into action. Stay tuned for the next update from the trail! Ω

**Spring Renewal is April 28-29, 2023**  
**at Sherwood Hall in Salinas**  
**Check the website for updates.**

[www.realepiscopal.org](http://www.realepiscopal.org)  
**Follow the Diocese of El Camino real**  
**with our website, e-newsletter RealEpiscopal,**  
**and on Facebook and Instagram**