



The SPIRE

The Newsletter of the
Episcopal Church of the Ascension
Sierra Madre, California

April 2006

Our Core Ministries

- Worship
- Formation
- Pastoral Care
- Fellowship
- Outreach
- Presence

Daylight Savings Time 🕒

Don't Forget Daylight Savings time begins Sunday, April 2. Turn your clocks forward one hour before going to bed Saturday night.

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✝ From the Rector

One of the magical parts of the Easter celebration for me is the gathering in the dark of the morning, before the sun has risen. People come into the church, and it is quiet, except for the occasional tinkle of bells that have been brought, and people shuffling, and babies that are just waking up. You know that there is life there, but it is still too dark to see it. And then the liturgy begins, and the church comes to life and light.

As many of you know, this has been a particularly poignant Lent for me, beginning on Ash Wednesday with the final illness of my father. I want to express my thanks to everyone for their support and prayers. Our staff here at Ascension, our lay volunteers, and my clergy colleagues have all been magnificent, and I am very appreciative.

I pray that for all of us, this will be an Easter of rediscovery of life and light.

—Fr. Michael

P.S. - It has been brought to my attention that sometimes as we enter the church and wait for the service to begin, we are forgetting to maintain the spirit of quiet and reverence that is needed for prayer and silent meditation. There is plenty of time for greeting and sharing after the mass.

Holy Week and Easter Schedule

Palm Sunday—April 9, Mass at 8:00 & 10:15

Monday & Tuesday in Holy Week—April 10 & 11, Mass at 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday in Holy Week—April 12 Mass at Noon and Tenebrae at 7:30 p.m.

Maundy Thursday—April 13, Mass at 7:00 a.m. & 7:30 p.m.. The Watch of the Altar of Repose will follow the Maundy

Thursday Mass until Noon on Friday.

Good Friday—April 14, Stations of the Cross at Noon and Liturgy at 7:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday—April 16, Vigil at 6:00 a.m., Brunch 8:00—10:00 a.m., Egg Hunt 8:45 a.m., and Solemn High Mass at 10:15 a.m.

Small Group News

Are you looking for a way to be connected in community here at church? The small group ministry is a good way to meet and get to know others. Here is a partial listing of current small groups you can attend:

A Study of Revelation—meets Sundays from 9-10 a.m. in the Parish House. Leader: Jean Rowe.

A Study of Psalms—meets Sundays from 9-10 a.m. in the church library. Leader: Paul Anderson.

A Study of the current Sunday's lessons—meets Sundays from 9-10 at the Gooden School. Leader: Fr. John Larsen.

A Study of the Book of Genesis—meets Tuesdays from 7:30-9 p.m. at the home of Glenn and Michelle Rohrer.

The Rector's Forum—Currently reading Why Study the Past? By Rowan Williams. Meets Thursdays from 9-10 a.m. in the Rector's office. Leader: Fr. Michael.

Adjusting to Change and Dealing with Loss—will begin Wednesday, April 19 at 2 p.m. in the parish library. It will continue for 6—8 weeks. Group is limited to 3—6 members. Call the office to RSVP for this group. Leader: Diane Rhodus.

We Look forward to welcoming you into any of these groups.

—Halcyon Koerber

Bishop's Visit and Confirmation

Bishop Anderson will be visiting on Low Sunday, the Second Sunday of Easter, April 23. **There will be one service at 9:00 a.m.** Catechesis and small groups will not be meeting. Persons interested in being confirmed, received, or in renewing their confirmation vows must speak to the Rector in the next couple of weeks.

We look forward to Bishop Anderson's visit and the opportunity to spend time with one of our Bishops. Before coming to our Diocese as an Assisting Bishop, Bishop Anderson served as the Bishop of Minnesota.

Ascension Youth Focus on Outreach

In the past three months, our youth have been reaching out to others. In January they helped feed the hungry at the Cold Weather Shelter, and on Shrove Tuesday they raised over \$500 for a parish in the Diocese of Louisiana battered by hurricane Katrina. At their March coffee hour bake sales, the youth raised over \$800 for Operation Smile, a non-profit, volunteer medical services organization that provides reconstructive facial surgery to indigent children and adults in twenty-four countries.

Our Senior Warden, Jean Rowe, recently wrote to our youth thanking them and their leaders for the outreach work they have done, saying, "On behalf of the parish, I would like to tell you how much we admire your recent efforts in Outreach Ministry. We are very proud of you. Now it is up to us, the adults of the parish to take up the Outreach vision you have shown us....Thank you for being the wonderful young people you are."

Youth Happenings

Sunday, March 26th—Field trip to Forest Lawn, Glendale. Discovering the works of art about the Passion of Christ.

Saturday-Sunday, April 1st-2nd—Overnight Youth Retreat at the Cathedral in Los Angeles

Sunday, April 9th—Seder Meal at St. Mark's, Altadena at 4:00 p.m. High School Youth only invited to attend.

Saturday, April 22nd—Youth Day at Knott's Berry Farm

Sunday, May 21st—Sunday Afternoon Blast at Boomer's

Camp Stevens Brochures are now available for Summer Camp 2006. Deacon Barrett will be Chaplain for the "All Ages Adventure" July 9-15. Fr. Michael will be Chaplain for the "Teen Backpack" July 30-August 5 & "International Odyssey" August 6-12. Mother Beal will be Chaplain at "Choir Camp" August 13-19. Some scholarships may be available. See Deacon Barrett for more information.



The youth raised over \$800 for Operation Smile. Pictured left to right: are: Katie Koerber, Matt Bamberger, Kelly Walter, Fr. Michael, Caitlin Skelly, Diane Rhodus, Deacon Barrett, Bronwin Dodd, Ken Hamilton, Noemi Vargas, and Michelle Rohrer.

April 2006

Upcoming Dates

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| | | | | | | 1 9:00 am Altar Guild 11:30 am St. Mary's Guild |
| 2 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass Noon PMC | 3 6:30 pm Group Leaders Mtg | 4 | 5 10:30 Staff Mtg Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass Lenten Supper | 6 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum | 7 Noon Mass | 8 9:00 am Altar Guild |
| 9 Palm Sunday 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass | 10 7:30 pm Mass | 11 7:30 pm Mass | 12 Noon Mass 7:30 pm Tenebrae | 13 7:00 am Mass 7:30 pm Maundy Thursday | 14 Noon Stations of the Cross 7:30 pm Good Friday Liturgy | 15 9:00 am Altar Guild <i>Spire Deadline</i> |
| 16 Easter 6:00 am Vigil 8:00 am Brunch 10:15 am Mass | 17 <i>Office Closed</i> | 18 | 19 10:30 Staff Mtg Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir | 20 7:00 am Mass | 21 Noon Mass | 22 9:00 am Altar Guild Youth at Knott's |
| 23 Bishop Visit 9:00 am Mass (one service only) | 24 | 25 6:30 pm Vestry | 26 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir | 27 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum | 28 Noon Mass | 29 9:00 am Altar Guild |
| 30 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass | | | | | | |

- April 1 & 2—Youth Retreat in downtown LA
- April 1—St. Mary's Guild Luncheon at 11:30 a.m. in parish hall.
- April 2—Parish Ministry Council at Noon
- April 5—Last Lenten Supper & Program
- April 9—Palm Sunday
- April 10-14—Holy Week
- April 16—Easter
- April 22—Youth at Knott's Berry Farm
- April 23—9:00 a.m. single service for Bishop Anderson's Visit & Confirmation
- April 25—Vestry Meeting at 6:30 p.m.
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Notes from the Loft

The month of April provides great opportunity for marvelous music – both contemplative and festive.

April 2 will feature a classical guitar and flute duo, with a bit of oboe added for flavor. The choir will be presenting “My Jesus, I Love Thee” by Paul Sjolund, which was one of our anthems for the recent choral festival, and Walter Pelz’ “Show Me Thy Ways.”

Craig Courtney’s “Behold, the Lamb of God” and a Hal Hopson arrangement of Billings’ “When Jesus Wept” will be sung on Palm/Passion Sunday. At the conclusion of the service, rather than the usual

organ voluntary, Mark Riebs will sing the powerful “God My Father,” from Dubois’ “The Seven Last Words of Christ.”

The Maundy Thursday service will include “Love One Another” by Anne Krentz Organ, Maurice Durufle’s “Ubi Caritas,” and the Taize selection, “Eat This Bread.”

On Good Friday as we venerate the cross, David Evans’ “O Cross of Christ” will be sung.

And Easter will feature Douglas Wagner’s “Easter Fanfare,” with trumpeter Jay Cohen, and the celebratory “Awake My Lute,” by Jane Marshall.

On April 23, as the Bishop is with us, the choir will

be presenting “Crowned With Glory” by Robert Leaf, again with trumpet, and a spectacular anthem I recently discovered, “Love Bade Me Welcome” by Roland Martin.

May the music of this holy season speak to you deep within your being, enriching your observation of the passion of our Lord and the celebration of his glorious resurrection.

—Debora Huffman
Organist/Choirmaster

New of Ascensionites

Jack Bamberger passed away March 2. Services were held in Carlsbad Saturday, March 11.
Nancy Harwich passed away March 14. Services were held here at Ascension on March 18.
Susan Park, sister of Liz Delgado, daughter of Fr. Delgado and SAMS Missionary will be visiting for 6 weeks. We look forward to a ministry update in May.



Children displaying the masks they made at the Youth Sponsored Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper February 28. The event raised \$550 for a parish devastated by Hurricane Katrina

Our vision is that the Church of the Ascension serves Christ today for those who will come to know Christ tomorrow.

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The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

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From the Senior Warden

Last month I discussed how the programs of our church have expanded as our parish has grown. Another consequence of being a Program Church is in the area of leadership. When we were a pastoral church (a church that is small enough for the Rector to be able to do almost everything), Father Michael and the Vestry were the leadership team. Today in order to meet the needs of our "Program Church," Father Michael has three support groups: Vestry, Staff, and Parish Ministry Council.

The Vestry, nine elected Vestry members, the Rector, and the Treasurer, meets once a month. The Vestry keeps the mission of our church clearly before the parish. It also manages the congregation's resources including the church's operating funds, investments, furnishings, and buildings and grounds. As our congregation has grown, our financial governance role has become

more and more complex. To meet these growing needs, the Vestry recently instituted six Vestry Committees: Finance/Audit, Insurance, Legal, Operations/Property, Future Planning/Capital Needs, and Administrative/Archives /Technology.

The Staff, which consists of the Rector, other salaried clergy, Parish Secretary, the Ministries Coordinator, the Welcomer's Coordinator, and the Ministry Council Leader, meet twice a month to plan the church services calendar, assign responsibilities for each church service, review the special needs of the sick, any diocesan activities that relate to our parish, publicity for special services, etc. They are in charge of making decisions that relate to the worship and pastoral care of the parish.

Parish Ministry Council oversees all the ministries of our church. Meeting every other month for lunch

and discussion, leaders of our fifty-one ministries, our Ministries Coordinator, the Parish Ministry Council leader, and our Rector calendar all events and determine how those events are organized. They evaluate the success of each activity and brainstorm about what worked well and how we can do it better next time; they equip leaders to be better, more successful, and fruitful in their ministries; they look for new ways to meet the growing needs of our parish.

As Senior Warden, I have the opportunity to attend all three leadership groups and can attest to how well the coordination of these various teams is working. We members of Ascension should thank God for sending us such dedicated priests and lay people to guide us.

—Jean Rowe