

Spring is here...

and we are starting a new topic for our small group. The workbook for our bible study is titled, "Re-Charging your Prayer Life; Making use of the power that's available." We meet every Sunday from 9:10 am to 10:10 am in the dining room in the Parish House. You are invited to join us for study, fellowship, fun, and, of course, prayer. Questions? Contact Bev Clifton or Melinda Monachino.

Are you a Reader?

Would you like to be a reader? All who are interested please come to the Reader training session after the 10:15 am service on May 2nd.

Mark your calendar!



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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Monthly Financial Update

One of the goals of the 2010 Vestry is to increase our financial transparency so that parishioners can see for themselves how we are doing in meeting our budget goals. We hope to accomplish this objective by including a financial column in our monthly Spire.

	March, 2010	
	Actual	Budget
Income		
Pledges	17,900	16,250
Plate	1,646	2,083
Other	-0-	8
Total:	19,546	18,341
Expenses		
Planned	30,851	23,809
Unplanned	927	-0-
Total:	31,778	23,809

Small Groups Currently Meeting

Sundays 9:10 - 10:10

Lectio Divina	Rector's Office
Relating to Others as Jesus Would	Parish House
John 11-21 My Peace I Give You	Parish House
Recharging Your Prayer Life	Parish House

Weekday Small Groups

Tuesday Dinner Group	Location in weekly bulletin
Rector's Forum	Thursdays 9:00 am Rector's Office
Discovering Your Spiritual Gifts	Saturdays at 10 Parish Hall Library

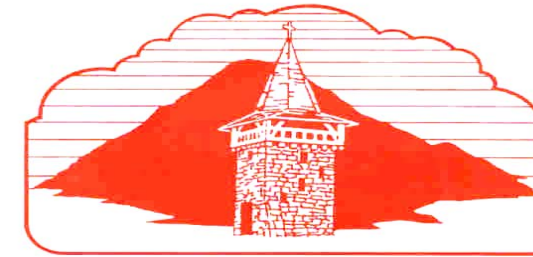
Verger's Work Party

There will be a parish work day on Saturday, April 10th. There is a lot for all to do; no experience is required. We usually start between 8-8:30 and end before noon. So come one, come all and we will have a great day of fellowship.

Well Dollars Report



As of April 5th, we have raised \$ 3,824. To dig a well we still need to raise \$ 1,176. Let's fill the water bottle and build that well!



The **SPIRE**

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

April, 2010

Worship

Sundays

8:00 Mass
8:55 Coffee Hour
9:10 Education
10:15 Mass
11:30 Coffee Hour

Wednesday

6:00pm Mass

Thursday

7:00 am Mass

Friday

12:00 Mass

From the Rector

In so many ways, our program at this year's Chef's Dinner was inspiring. Guest speaker Gil Garcetti's topic was, at least on the surface, about the need to provide water for the Third World. Gil Garcetti offered his personal testimonial about the important differences that a sustainable water source can make for a village. The photos from his book Water Is Key showing the changes water can bring were simply stunning. But there was another theme in the story he told that was equally engaging.

Gil Garcetti described how after not being re-elected as the District Attorney of Los Angeles County, he took the opportunity unemployment provided to ask himself what he wanted to do with the rest of his life. He knew that he had always had a passion for photography and had, in fact, gone to photography school. And so in 2000, he was faced with the choice of going into private practice as an attorney, or doing "something else." He chose to "re-invent" himself and in the process found himself doing things he had never even considered before. His art led him back to advocacy, but this time on behalf of some of the world's poorest people.

The theme of "re-invention" was layered into the story he told. There was his own story of how he was led into doing new things. There was the story of the transformation that

takes place in the villages of West Africa when a well is brought into service. And there was the story about how some LA area folks decided that they wanted to travel to West Africa to see for themselves the difference that the new water source was making. They came home convinced that they had to give significantly more money to the effort because like Gil Garcetti they had seen for themselves how communities can be transformed through the provision of clean water and in the process of seeing became transformed themselves. This last story came with a warning to those of us in attendance that actively engaging in a project of this magnitude has the power to change us as well.

Easter is about transformation and all things being made new. Through the Resurrection, humanity is re-invented. I pray that this Eastertide will be a time for all of us to consider the opportunities for change that God is placing in front of us. Our parish will soon be celebrating 125 years of our history; and while we will be looking back, I also pray that we will be inspired by the forward looking vision of our founders and our predecessors. I invite each of us to consider how God is calling us to "re-invent" Ascension for the decades to come.

Yours in Christ, MAB+



Upcoming Events

April 10 Parish Work Day

April 13 Remember to vote!

April 20 Vestry Meeting

April 25 PMC Meeting

May 15 Suffragan Bishops Ordination (Long Beach)

May 16 Evensong, Potluck, Hawks Hall Dedication

Yoga resumes meeting at Ascension every Wednesday beginning April 7th at 6:00 pm.



SENIOR WARDEN'S BLOG

He is risen! He is risen, indeed! The miracle of Easter lifts the spirit and the soul and offers each of us the hope of redemption and renewal. Redemption and renewal are, of course, available to us individually through our core ministries (Worship, Formation, Fellowship, Outreach, Pastoral Care, and Presence). But what redemption and renewal are offered to Ascension as an institution? No institution, be it government, school, business, or church, can remain static and survive. The Staff (both clergy and lay folk), the Vestry, and the Parish Ministry Council (PMC), our three leadership organizations, recognize the need for renewal if we are to be a vibrant and growing church. Each of the leadership groups looks for ways to not only assist parishioners in their individual spiritual growth and renewal, but also make sure that Ascension itself does not become complacent and moribund.

As part of our institutional renewal process, the Vestry has reconstituted its Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC), charging it with the task of discerning what to do with our plant and property over the next five or ten years. This process, of course, requires a determination of how best to use the resources with which we have been entrusted and the programs that will best use and sustain those resources. In each case, our goal is to further our mission of serving Christ today for those who will come to know and serve Christ tomorrow. Implicit in the Vestry's charge to the LRPC is the requirement that it determine not only what we of Ascension would like to do (or believe that we must do), but also what we are physically, emotionally, and financially able to do. The LRPC, under the leadership of Tom Duffy, Keiko Sakatani, Ross Kellock, and Rob Stockly, will soon be contacting each of you to elicit your thoughts and suggestions. Please assist them in this discernment process.

On the administrative level, the Staff, Vestry, and PMC have revised our organizational table in hopes of improving communication and furthering our transition to a program church. You may recollect that in my May 2009 Blog, I described the sociological categories of churches: "family" churches, "priest centered" churches, "program" churches, and "corporate" churches -- with transitional churches in the interstices. The sociological hierarchy is, obviously, but not entirely, correlated with size and wealth. Ascension is currently transitioning from a priest centered church to a program church. In the former, little happens without the priest's direct intervention. In the latter, responsibility for all but the liturgy falls upon the laity, with the priest directing, encouraging, and coordinating.

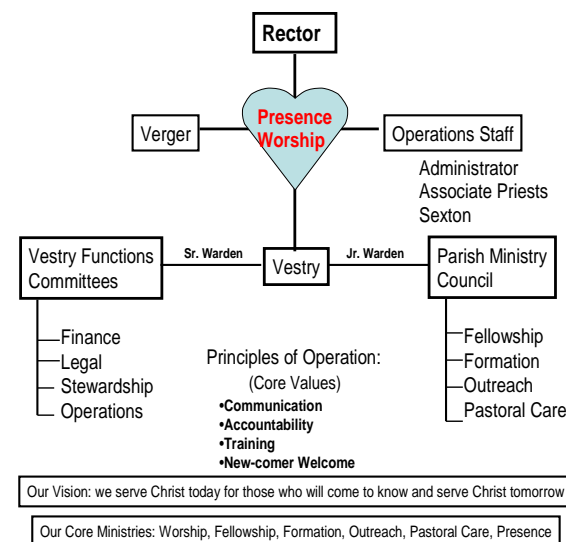
In program churches, expanding programs means expanding lay responsibilities and the concomitant need for better lines of authority and communication. Thus, our revised organizational table (see copy below) recognizes that Worship and Presence are the heart of our religious experience; the Vestry sets policy and raises funds; and the PMC carries out the actual programs. The Verger's responsibility

is to coordinate and train the Worship related groups (acolytes, lay readers etc.) and to organize and supervise Presence Ministry Groups (parish work parties, the Memorial Garden, the Archives Committee, etc.) based upon the authority given to him by the Rector. It will be the Vestry's continuing responsibility, under the supervision of the Senior Warden, to set policy and raise funds to support our core ministries. The PMC, under the supervision of the Junior Warden, will continue to be responsible for the development and implementation of our educational (Formation), Pastoral Care, Outreach, and Fellowship programs. We will shortly post a more detailed organizational table showing the various committees, subcommittees, and other groups as well as their leaders (contact persons). Please use that upcoming table of information to discuss programs, problems, and suggestions with the appropriate indicated leader. Stated otherwise, don't take everything to the Rector; he will only tell you to speak with the appropriate committee or sub-committee chair. By expanding leadership responsibility and decentralizing authority, we hope to encourage initiative and growth. We recognize that making these changes may not be easy, but no one ever said that being a Christian was going to be easy.

What better way to celebrate Eastertide than to contribute your energy and skills to our transition into a program church. With your help, we can not only expand our outreach to others, but also demonstrate our commitment to the Christian life and truly serve Christ today for those who will come to know and serve Christ tomorrow.

Yours in Christ.

Ted



NOTES FROM THE LOFT

April, ushered in by Maundy Thursday, commemorated the Last Supper of Jesus with his disciples. In the themes of love and service, the choir sang "The Servant Song" by David Schwoebel and based on the BEACH SPRING from the "Sacred Harp," as well as Maurice Durufle's beloved "Ubi Caritas." On Good Friday we remembered the crucifixion of our Lord and venerated the cross to what has become traditional, "The Cross of Christ" by David Evans.

The music of Easter was glorious, with festival choir and Jay Cohen's trumpet. In addition to our annual "Choral Fanfare on 'Jesus Christ Is Risen Today'" and EASTER HYMN, the congregation joined the choir in a rendition of "Thine Is the Glory" (JUDAS MACCABAEUS). The offertory anthem was "Christ Is Risen! Shout Hosanna!" text by Brian Wren and music by Thomas Pavlechko, written for choir, organ, and brass.

The beautiful, esoteric text for the communion anthem entitled "A Better Resurrection" was written by Christina Rossetti and set to music by Craig Courtney. In the words of the composer, "Each stanza of the poem describes aspects of nature which demonstrate death and rebirth and each stanza ends with a plea: *O Jesus quicken me, O Jesus rise in me and O Jesus drink of me.* It is here that Rossetti moves beyond her personal struggle (with her humanity, doubt and pain) and speaks of the relationship between the Infinite and the finite, the Creator and the created. It is through her struggle and its resolution that I find my own faith strengthened." And so may it be for you.

And may the glory of Easter remain with you throughout each day of this month.

Music speaks what cannot be expressed, soothes the mind and gives it rest, heals the heart and makes it whole, flows from heaven to the soul. - origin unknown

Debora Huffman
Director of Music and Organist

HAVE YOU SEEN A PIANO BENCH?

The piano bench that complements the Baldwin Acrosonic spinet piano in the sanctuary is missing. If you've seen it anywhere, please notify Dr. Huffman or the church office. If, per chance, you've "borrowed" it for a while, please let us know and return it as soon as possible.

Thank You!

A Congressional Gold Medalist in our Midst



Alyce Rohrer was recently recognized for her service during the Second WW as a pilot for the Women's Air Force Service (WASP.) Congress in 2009 authorized the presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award our country can bestow, to these heroic women. During her time in the service, Alyce piloted every type of aircraft in the military. She served as a training pilot as well as a test pilot. In March, Alyce and her daughter, son, and daughter-in-law all traveled to Washington DC for the awards ceremony held in the Capitol Rotunda. Thank you, Alyce, and congratulations!

Do You Know Your Spiritual Gifts?

We all have at least one. Some possibilities are

<i>Healing</i>	<i>Hospitality</i>
<i>Teaching</i>	<i>Mercy</i>
<i>Intercession</i>	<i>Service</i>
<i>Leadership</i>	<i>Evangelism</i>

A new small group is forming to study the wonderful chance we all have to spend more time using our strengths and being less used up and tired. Beginning April 24th, we will meet from 10—11:30 am in the parish library and will continue to gather every Saturday through June 5th. Please call Diane Rhodus for more information or to sign up.