



The SPIRE

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

August 2006

Our Core Ministries

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

Ministry Fair

September 10

11:30 a.m.

Fall Kick-Off

September 17

All Programs resume

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✝ From the Rector

A few people have noted and commented on the changes to the front cover of the Sunday bulletins. Over the years we have had many designs for the cover, and our new bulletin is a blend of an earlier artistic rendition (drawn by Rhett Judice) and words both familiar and new. As one person pointed out, by including both our vision statement – “Our Vision is that we serve Christ today, for those who will come to know and serve Christ tomorrow” – and our six words of mission – “Worship, Formation, Fellowship, Outreach, Pastoral Care, and Presence,” we highlight what we’re about as well as what our building looks like. Hopefully, by now, many of us can recall our vision and the core elements of our mission easily. I believe that by staying focused on our primary tasks, we will continue to be an effective witness and blessing to our community. And speaking of community, you may have noticed two other items on the bulletin. The word Episcopal is immediately below the name of the parish. For one hundred and twenty years, we have been the Episcopal Church in Sierra Madre. We worship with the Book of Common Prayer. We look, sound, smell, taste like an Episcopal parish. This is who we have been, and it is who we are. The other new phrase

is “A Village Church.” This is a very deliberate effort to say more about what we are and what we want to become at a variety of levels. In the most basic sense, Ascension is one of six churches in the “village” of Sierra Madre, and we are the oldest of these. In another sense, we are very closely tied to the community, and more and more the town looks to Ascension as the community church and to me as the village priest. (I suppose that’s better than looking to me as the village idiot.) On a still deeper level, we are trying to build a community in this parish where people can come to experience a meaningful sense of belonging. Just for clarification, you don’t have to live in Sierra Madre to belong to this village church. I am convinced that a corollary of the African saying that “it takes a village to raise a child” could be that it takes a village church to nurture a Christian. More and more in our fragmented world, people want to be connected. Our village church is about connecting people in Worship, Formation, Fellowship, Outreach, Pastoral Care, and Presence. And it is in this context that we believe people will come to know they belong to Christ.

—Fr. Michael

Deacon Van Buren Send-Off Celebration

By now, many of you may know that Deacon Barrett has received a new assignment with the diocese and has started work at the Cathedral Center in Los Angeles. He is pleased to now be working with the Rev’d Michael Cooper in the Office of Christian Education. Deacon Bar-

rett will be returning here for a send-off celebration on Sunday, August 13th after both services. Anyone interested in assisting with the festivities should contact the Senior Warden Jean Rowe.

Ministry Fair

Why the Ministry Fair? The Ministry Fair at Ascension is an opportunity to look at, talk about, and investigate possible family and personal ministries. joy and energy come when we accept our servant hood in the body of Christ and participate in the ministries to which we are called.

Check out all the displays, talk with the people, learn about what we are doing, find where you can serve. It will bring you joy!

—Diane Rhodus

Parish Ministry Council

Attention all ministry leaders; from Altar Guild to Welcomers, from Bread Makers to Vestry, our next potluck meeting will be Sunday, August 20th at noon in the Parish House. The main focus will be our Ministry Fair on Sunday, September 10th. Please begin planning your display, exhibit, or signup sheets now. Contact Diane Rhodus if you have any questions.

St. Mary's Guild

St. Mary's Guild will meet on Saturday, September 9 at 11:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall for a potluck lunch and business meeting. All women are invited to attend. For additional information, please call President Ann Poland.

Help Wanted

- Must love kids and get joy from being with them
- Understands what goes on in the minds of 3rd—6th grade kids or at least would like to find out.
- Likes to talk with this age group about Jesus and faith
- Is ready to go with the flow of a young person's mind
- Is willing to give 1 ½ hrs of time a week to this ministry
- Likes to share responsibilities with a partner

If you have read this far, you might be a person we are looking for or you might know someone who has these qualifications. As you probably have guessed by our job description, Ascension needs two or more people to lead our third through sixth grade

Christian education class. One does not have to be a parent to be called to this ministry, nor have any previous teaching experience, nor have to lead the class alone. We have the curriculum. What is needed is a love for children and a desire to help them grow in their knowledge of our Lord.

Take a chance – call Diane Rhodus or speak to the rector for more details about this important ministry.

Ascension on the Web

Have you checked out Ascension's web site yet? You will find a wealth of information available at whatever hour you want it.

You can click on **SERVICES** and immediately see our Sunday and weekday schedules. If you choose the heading **STAFF**, you can find pictures and biographical information. **MINISTRIES** lists our 6 core ministries and the variety of ways to participate in each. If you have misplaced your copy, lay ministers, presenters, and servers can quickly reproduce the monthly schedule which is also listed under this title. If you choose the heading **NEWS**, you can find the latest announcements, a photo gallery of a re-

cent church event, and all the monthly Spires beginning with the year 2004. Under **VIRTUAL TOUR**, you can find a brief history of Ascension and many pictures of the church. **EDUCATION** gives information about our education offerings for CHILDREN, for TEENAGERS and for ADULTS. The TEENAGERS section also contains Youth Group News. The ADULT section provides information about what is being taught in each of our small groups and when and where these groups meet. If you select **NEWCOMER**, you can learn about events designed especially for those just getting to know us as well as driving directions to get to our church. If you

click on **LINKS**, you can find websites which include the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Los Angeles, the Gooden School, the Book of Common Prayer, the Lectionary page, and the Daily Office. We also have **ON LINE FORMS** ready for your use. These include prayer requests, pledge forms, youth group permission slips, baptismal papers, our wedding brochure, and funeral/burial instructions. More forms will be available soon.

Do take the time to look for yourself. And if you want to share information about Ascension with others, suggest they log on to www.ascension-sierramadre.com.

August 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 <i>Noon Mass 1-7 Blood Drive 6:00 pm Mass</i>	3 <i>7:00 am Mass</i>	4 <i>Noon Mass</i>	5 <i>9:00 Altar Guild</i>
6 <i>8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass</i>	7 <i>6:30 pm Capital Fund Committee</i>	8	9 <i>Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass</i>	10	11 <i>Noon Mass</i>	12 <i>9:00 Altar Guild</i>
13 <i>8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass</i>	14	15 Spire Deadline <i>6:30 pm Vestry Mtg</i>	16 <i>Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass</i>	17	18 <i>Noon Mass</i>	19 <i>9:00 Altar Guild 9:00 Usher Workshop</i>
20 <i>8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass Noon—PMC</i>	21	22	23 <i>10:30 Staff Mtg Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass</i>	24	25 <i>Noon Mass</i>	26 <i>9:00 Altar Guild</i>
27 <i>8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass</i>	28	29	30 <i>Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass</i>	31		

Upcoming Dates

- July 31—August 12 Fr. Michael away at Camp
- August 2—Red Cross Blood Drive 11:00—7:00 at Gooden
- August 7—Capital Fund Drive Committee Meeting 6:30 pm
- August 15—Spire Deadline and Vestry Meeting at 6:30 pm
- August 19—Usher Workshop at 9:00 am
- August 20—Parish Ministry Council Meeting at Noon

Notes from the Loft

A word of appreciation to cellist Michelle Hopkins for sharing her musical artistry with us a few weeks ago! Michelle, her husband Eric, (a classical guitarist), and children recently moved to the area, and we are indeed fortunate to have them in our midst.

This year's national convention of the American Guild of Organists in Chicago was both enjoyable and inspirational. Some of the notable concerts/worship services I attended were at Orchestra Hall, Valparaiso University, St. James Cathedral, Holy Name Cathedral, Fourth Presbyterian Church, and St. Mary of Perpetual Help. A

glorious hymn festival was held at the stunning St. Raphael Roman Catholic Church in Naperville, and I heard the new Schantz organ at College Church in Wheaton. The Berghaus Organ Company sponsored a day of touring various installations at churches in the Chicago area, culminated by a tour of the organ shop and a concert by Cherry Rhodes, USC Thornton School professor, at the glorious Queen of All Saints Basilica.

Finally, three choral reading sessions introduced me to some new anthems that you'll be hearing during the coming year.

On a personal level, the

convention provided me the opportunity to reconnect with people and places from my past, in particular my high school organ teacher and my organ professor at Wheaton College. I remain indebted to these musicians for the influence they had on my life, so it was truly a gift to spend time with them again.

—Debora Huffman

Director of Music and Organist



Mass on the Grass—Sunday, July 2



at Sierra Vista Park.



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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News from the Sr. Warden

On Sunday, the 10th of September, Church of the Ascension kicks off the fall season with our annual Parish Ministry Fair.

Expect to see balloons, banners, and colorful streamers as you come out of church on the 10th. As we gather on the Laurel side of the church, we will feast on weather appropriate food and have a chance to view the many exhibits that tell the story of each of the ministries in which our parish members are involved.

If you want to participate in the activities of our church but don't know what opportunities are out there that fit your own particular gifts and interests, the Ministry Fair is the right place to find out. You will be able to talk to members of each group and learn about meeting dates and plans for this coming year.

If you are not sure what your spiritual gifts are, where your gifts are

most needed, or where you will feel most comfortable, you will have an opportunity to take our spiritual gifts survey. After taking the survey, you may want to make an appointment to talk with Diane Rhodus, our Ministries Coordinator, about how the survey can help interpret what your gifts are, which groups will best meet your needs, and how you can most effectively participate in the activities of our parish.

We will also have photographers ready to take pictures of you and your family for our new membership directory. Many people have said that they get to know other members better when we have a pictorial directory. We hope that everyone in the parish will be ready to strike a festive pose and say cheese for posterity on September 10th.

We also want everyone to fill out our new membership form. Lots of changes have happened to most of us

since we first joined the church. Some families have more little ones, others have changed address and phone numbers, sent children off to college, married off sons and daughters, etc. We need you to update our records, and on September 10th we will have a table, chair, pens, and the form ready for you to fill out.

So, get out your calendar and circle September 10th. Our theme this year is Celebrating Ministry – Yours, Mine, and Ours. To truly celebrate the ministries of Ascension, we need everyone's participation. Please join us and be part of this year's celebration.

—Jean Rowe