



# The SPIRE

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

December 2005

## Our Core Ministries

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

## Youth Group Reunion

Calling all alumni youth and leaders. You are invited to a reunion luncheon on Sunday, January 1 at Noon hosted by the current youth.

Come and join us to get reacquainted and share your college or recent experiences.

Call Deacon Barrett for more information or to RSVP.

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## ✝ From the Rector

The theme of the sermons this Advent is "Accountability" – and how we see ourselves in relation to God. As we begin another year of Christian living, I pray that we all can take the opportunity to ask the deeper questions – what gifts and talents has God bestowed on me to use in God's world – are there new

opportunities for me to seek out – what holds me back from offering more to God and those around me? As Christmas approaches we can reflect on the love God has given us in Jesus, and know that the Kingdom of Christ breaking in upon us again and always. Blessings to you and all your loved ones.

—Michael+

## Christmas Flowers

You can help St. Anne's Altar Guild beautify our already beautiful sanctuary, by giving generously for Christmas flowers. Donations may be made "in memory" or "in thanksgiving" of loved ones. Envelopes are available in the back of the Church. Any and all donations help defray the ever increasing cost of flowers. Please turn in your envelopes at Church or mail them to the office. (Make checks payable to "St. Anne's Altar Guild.") For names to be included in the bulletin, donations must be received by Sunday, December 18. Thank you in advance for your support of Altar Guild.

—Lynne Holl

Join the Parish

Sunday, December 18

at 5:00 p.m.

For Lessons & Carols, Crèche displays and Potluck Dinner.

Followed by the

Community Candlelight Walk

at 7:00 p.m.

Sign up on the bulletin board.

## Children's Pageant - Christmas Eve

Here is your chance to see the animals, the characters, the angels, the shepherds and more at the birth of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. Mark your calendars for this important night with our children and youth gathered for the Christmas Eve service at 5:00PM. While the youth will be assisting in the various areas of worship, the children will be

making the Gospel message of our Lord's birth come alive.

For all parents that wish to have their children as a part of this holy evening, please contact Deacon Barrett or Mother Beal to find out rehearsal dates and parent's assistance needed for our annual Children's Christmas Pageant. All ages are welcome!!

## Survivor—Camp Stevens

Three days in the semi-wilderness with an Episcopalian tribe, add in music, hiking, apple pie, crafts, worship, treasure hunting and more, and you have an idea of the fun and fellowship in store at the all-parish retreat scheduled to happen January 27-29, 2006 at Camp Stevens near Julian. It's only semi-wilderness 'cause there will be comfy bunks, hot showers and delicious food that you won't have to hunt and kill yourselves. What could be better?

Ascensionites that are young, youngish, and young-once-upon-a-time are all welcome to sign up for this memory-making weekend. Your retreat planning committee has been hard at work dreaming up exciting ways to make our retreat theme come to life – “Discovering treasure in God’s creation, in God’s Word and sacrament, and in God’s people.”

The kingdom of God is more than thuribles, potlucks and stewardship speeches (thank goodness for that!) and we aim to emphasize the beauty and joy of being a parish family on their journey together. Please consult the informational flyer you received in the mail around mid-November. You can also ask a retreat committee member if you have questions. They are The Rev. Canon Michael Bamberger, The Rev. Jennifer Beal, Christina Ortega, Diane Rhodus, Beth Smith-Kellock, and The Rev. Barrett Van Buren.

Reserve your spot now as we have limited space at Camp Stevens. We hope you will join us!

—Christina Ortega, Retreat Committee

## Catechesis

The following Catechesis presentations will be held in Atrium I on the dates designated. Family members are strongly encouraged to attend these most special Advent and Christmas presentations with their children.

November 27	Advent Wreath
December 4	Prophecy of Bethlehem
December 11	Prophecy of the Star and Scepter
December 18	Nativity

Please contact Elizabeth Wilson or Cameron Cox with any questions.

—Elizabeth Wilson

## Way Better than Knott’s Scary Farm...it’s...the YOUTH GROUP!

A Halloween Party occurred at Church on October 29<sup>th</sup>. There was food galore as well as a haunted basement. The theme for the basement was “The Mausoleum”. It had three parts: a graveyard, a mausoleum, and a completely dark room. It caused quite a scream. The mood upstairs, however, was more lighthearted. Attendees ate and chatted to such songs as “The Monster Mash”, a Halloween classic.

There was also a costume contest. The children’s winners were Scariest: Robbie Nardoni, the flying monkey; Most Creative: Katalina Gamarra, as a character from The Golden Compass; and Best All-

Around: Sophie Schleifer as a fairy princess. Adult winners were Scariest: Carol Meals, a witch; Funniest: Dave Nardoni, the Tin Man.; and Best All Around: Norma Hamilton as a medieval princess.

Although the omnipresent Youth Grab Bag was not in attendance, prizes still were handed out and (we hope!) enjoyed by the victors. Thank you to all who attended and brought food. And a special thanks to Deacon Barrett and Robin Nardoni, who helped decorate the parish hall and, in general, organized the festivity.

—Katie Koerber

## St. Mary’s Guild

Our next meeting will be held on Sunday, December 11, 2005 in the parish library following the 10:15 service. St. Mary’s will provide a light lunch to those attending.

We will be planning for our participation in the Lessons and Carols and potluck event on December 18<sup>th</sup>. There will be a display of Christmas crèches on the 18<sup>th</sup>, so please bring your personal favorite, labeled

with your name and interesting information regarding the crèche, to church on December 11 or 18th. We will also have a small “Elegant Elephant” sale with proceedings going to missionaries and camperships. Our Christmas afghan drawing will be held during the evening. Tickets sales will begin November 27<sup>th</sup>.

—Ann Poland, President

# December 2005

## Dates to Remember

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	2 Noon Mass Diocesan Convention	3 9:00 am Altar Guild Diocesan Convention
4 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass	5 6:00 pm Group Leaders Meeting	6	7 10:00 Staff Mtg Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	8 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	9 Noon Mass	10 9:00 am Altar Guild
11 8:00 Mass 10:15 Mass Noon PMC 5:00 pm Youth Tree	12	13	14 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	15 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum Spire Deadline	16 Noon Mass	17 9:00 am Altar Guild
18 8:00 Mass 10:15 Mass 4:00 Carols & Potluck 7:00 Candlelight Walk	19	20 6:30 pm Vestry Mtg	21 10:30 Staff Mtg Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	22 7:00 am Mass	23 Office Closed Noon Mass	24 Christmas Eve 5:00 pm Pageant & Mass 10:30 pm Mass
25 Christmas Day 11:00 am Mass	26 Office Closed	27	28 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	29 7:00 am Mass	30 Office Closed Noon Mass	31 9:00 am Altar Guild

- December 2 & 3—  
Diocesan Convention in  
Riverside
- December 11—St. Mary's  
Guild meeting
- December 11—Parish  
Ministry Council at Noon
- December 11—Youth  
Group Tree Trimming Party  
at 4:00 pm
- December 18—Lessons &  
Carols potluck followed by  
the community Candlelight  
Walk
- December 20—Vestry  
Meeting
- December 24—Christmas  
Eve Services at 5:00 pm  
and 10:30 p.m.
- December 25—Christmas  
Day Mass at 11:00 a.m.
- January 1—Youth Group  
Reunion Luncheon at Noon

## Notes from the Loft

What a beautiful Evensong we shared on November 6! Thanks to the Parish Choir for their wonderful anthems, to Susan Beach and Jen Wang for their gorgeous “Pie Jesu,” to the Rev’d. Jennifer Beal for her cello obligato, to Father Bamberger and Frank Clark for leading the liturgy, to the congregation for joining us in worship, and to St. Mary’s Guild for their fabulous reception!

With this edition of the Spire, another liturgical year has ended and the season of Advent is upon us. Our music for the next few weeks anticipates the coming of the Messiah, preparing our hearts for the glory that is Christmas. I hope you’ll join us for A Service of Lessons and Carols on the 18<sup>th</sup> (organ and congregation). On Christmas Eve the choir will present the traditional Hymns and Carols at 10:30 p.m., immediately before the Christmas Eve Mass.

I trust that the glorious music of this season will enrich your holiday worship – a blessed Christmas to each of you!

—Debora Huffman, Organist/Choirmaster

## Curate’s Comments

It is with deep appreciation for the gifts, support and prayers of this wonderful parish. What a joy it was to see the 24 people from Ascension at my Diaconate ordination and our choir being represented. It was great to see the banner of Ascension, carried by Cameron Cox, a part of the procession with the other parishes represented. Along with the children and youth also represented in the congregation, Matt Bamberger showed everyone how to be a great Thurifer, excellent job and Kara Larew was a great Lay Reader!

I cannot thank Father Michael enough for an inspirational sermon that strongly touched *both* the clergy and laity. The reception afterwards, coordinated by Karen Mooradian Debbie Bamberger, and Jo Mosier was so enjoyable. What gracious hospitality. Those cakes were delicious too! Thank you so much!!

With over 200 people gathered, it was a powerful service that will never be forgotten. I look forward being the “servant” God and our Bishop has called me to be for all God’s people at Ascension, for the diocese and for Christ’s Holy Church.

—Deacon Barrett

## Youth Group Calendar

**Dec. 10**—Sr. High will select Christmas tree .  
**Dec. 11**—4-8 pm Jr. & Sr. High decorate Christmas Tree, progressive dinner and gift exchange.  
**Dec. 18**—5 pm all youth join the parish for the Lessons, Carols, potluck and Candlelight walk.  
**Dec. 24**—5 pm Mass -usher, present, lector, prayers of the people, & assist with children's pageant .  
**Jan. 1**—at noon host lunch for alumni youth & leaders.



*Pictured left is the Ascension youth group at the recent Halloween Party. Our thanks to them for hosting a great party and a job well done!*

### *The Episcopal Church of the Ascension*



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**WORSHIP  
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OUTREACH  
PRESENCE**

## Notes from the Sr. Warden

I truly appreciate the parishioners who have already made their 2006 pledge. We all benefit from the generous support that springs from within the Ascension community so that we can continue and expand the many forms of ministry. If you have not made your pledge in this season of thanksgiving, now would be an excellent time to return your pledge card. With your growing support, the coming year has great potential for ensuring our parish's ministry long into the future.

I also want to thank Ted Bosley, Liz Delgado, Roger Keith, Halcyon Koerber, Jim and Kara Larew, and Robin Nardoni for sharing their stories during this year's Stewardship campaign. Enlightenment can come in many forms, but

the sharing of personal experiences within our parish community brought me a deeper meaning to worship and fellowship at Church of the Ascension.

I just attended the annual Prayer Breakfast at the Sierra Madre Woman's Club. This quintessential Sierra Madre event begins the season of thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas and serves as a warm reminder of the many blessings God has bestowed on my family and me. May the grace of God touch each of you during this season of promise and hope.

—Rob Stockly

### **Pledge Update**

*70 pledges have been received for \$133,400— this is 59% of our \$225,000 goal.*

## Year-End Notes

- PLEDGE CARDS are still being collected. If you have not done so already please turn in your pledge card in the offering plates during the offertory or mail into the office as soon as possible.
- OFFERING ENVELOPES for parishioners who have pledged will be available at the back of the church for pick up Sunday, December 11 & 18. Otherwise to receive envelopes please call the parish office and request them.
- 2005 PLEDGE PAYMENTS AND DONATIONS must be received or postmarked by December 31, 2005 to be included on your 2005 Charitable Contribution Statement,