



The SPIRE

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

February 2007

Our Core Ministries

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

Ash Wednesday Mass

will be celebrated

February 21

at

7:00 am, Noon, and
6:00 pm

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✝ From the Rector

If I had been asked twenty-two years ago if I thought the first nominee from Ascension in decades to be forwarded to the Bishop and Commission on Ministry for consideration and formation for ordination to the priesthood would be a woman, I don't know how I would have reacted. I would have been stunned and incredulous at best. Of course I hadn't met Allison Rainey then. So who would have guessed it? Of course, that was then, and this is now. While only in our parish were very supportive of the ordination of women in 1985, few of our members still have reservations or objections. As one of our folks told me some months ago, "I am still opposed to the ordination of women, but when it comes to Jennifer Beal, I'm happily conflicted." Knowing the good nature of this person, I was neither stunned nor incredulous – just thankful for his generous honesty.

Over the last twenty years, Ascension has had a clear ministry of helping to form several men and women for priesthood. We have assisted in the process of discernment and training, and because we have been serious about this ministry and have many wise lay people in our parish to work on this process, many have been ordained, and few have not.

Last spring, Allison Rainey sought out our parish partially because of our reputation as a parish committed to formation. Allison had already discerned a call to ordained

ministry and had embarked on a theological education. Because she needed to have a year of field placement and because her own parish was in the midst of a prolonged transition, she landed at Ascension. I formed a discernment committee, led by Nonie Lathrop, to work with Allison to answer the essential question – "should the Church call this person to priesthood?" Their response is that they can also see the call that Allison perceived, and our Vestry voted to nominate Allison to the diocese in December.

So what follows? Allison, Jean Rowe, and I will meet with Bishop Jon Bruno on February 1st, and providing that he too approves, Allison will attend a Postulancy Formation retreat in April. If she is made a postulant, a plan for her further formation will be designed. It should include Clinical Pastoral Education this summer – hopefully at Arcadia Methodist Hospital, completion of her studies and degree at Claremont, and completion of the General Ordination Examination next year. We will continue our commitment to helping her continue her immersion in parish life here at Ascension.

At this point, I ask your prayers for Allison and your continued commitment to the ministry of priestly formation that is ours at the Church of the Ascension.

—Canon Michael Bamberger

Ascension Celebrates Sierra Madre's Bicentennial

March 12 at 7:00 p.m.

Join our own Father Wood as he relates:

- his family's role in the founding of Ascension and the city of Sierra Madre,
- Ascension's role in the early life of Sierra Madre,

and

- his own memories of what it was like growing up in Sierra Madre in the 1920's and 30's.

This is a community wide event, so feel free to invite your family and friends.

Formation Schedule

Current Small Groups

A Study of Proverbs – Meets Sundays from 9 – 10 am in the Parish House. Leader: Jean Rowe

A Study of the Gospel of John – Meets Sundays from 9 – 10 am in the Parish House. Leader: Halcyon Koerber

A Study of the current Sunday's lessons – 9am – 10am. Meets in the church library. Leader: Fr. John Larson

A Study of the book of Ruth – Meets Tuesdays from 7:30 – 9:00 pm at the home of Glenn and Michelle Rohrer. Leader: Michelle Rohrer

The Rector's Forum – Currently reviewing General Ordination Exam questions. Meets Thursdays from 9 – 10 am in the rector's office. Leader: Fr. Michael Bamberger

Transitions/Grief Group – Meets Thursdays from 7-8:30 pm. in the Ministry Office. Leader: Diane Rhodus

Men's Breakfast Group – Meets second Saturday of each month from 8am-9:30 am Leader: Fr. Michael Bamberger

Young Families Dinner Group – Meets monthly for dinner and fellowship. Contact Erica and John Walton for information.

Please contact Halcyon Koerber or any small group leader for more information.

Catechesis Schedule I

Ages 3 – 6

Feb. 4	Yeast and Leaven or The Seed
Feb. 11	Valentine's Day Fun
Feb. 18	Good Shepherd
Feb. 25	Found Sheep

Catechesis Schedule II

Ages 6 – 10

Feb. 4	Epiclesis and Doxology
Feb. 11	Valentine's Day Fun
Feb. 18	No Atrium
Feb. 25	Holy Week Begins

Middle School Rite 13

Grades 6-8

Feb. 4	Images of God
Feb. 9	Bad Weather Shelter
Feb. 11	Rite 13 Liturgy Lesson and Preparation
Feb. 18	Prayer Lessons
Feb. 25	Decisions, Decisions

Senior High Youth Group

9th – 12th

Feb. 4	Luke 2:22-40 (Complete dinner plans)
Feb. 11	Luke 6:17-26 (5pm progressive dinner)
Feb. 18	Luke 9:28-36
Feb. 20	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Feb. 25	Luke 4:1-13

For more information, see Diane Rhodus, Ministry Coordinator

February 18 Celebration Liturgy

Baptism brings a child into the church, while confirmation allows a child to maturely affirm her or his faith to the public community. In between, there is a time of transformation and growth that deserves public recognition and celebration. In the liturgy called "Rite-13," we are not asking anything of our 13-year-olds, but rather simply acknowledging their journey toward adulthood.

On February 18, please join us with your prayers and presence in celebrating the continuing for-

mation of our youth and the future of Ascension at the 10:15 service. Look forward to sharing in this exciting time in the lives of our middle school youth!

Rite 13 Youth and Parents!

Friday, February 9 is our day to volunteer at the Bad Weather Shelter. Make sure to sign up to help prepare the food, serve or do both on this day. We hope to put what we've learned about serving hungry people in our community into action!

February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7:00 am Mass 9:00 Forum	2 Noon Mass	3 9:00 Altar Guild
4 8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	5 MAB at GOE	6 MAB at GOE	7 MAB at GOE Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	8 MAB at GOE 7:00 am Mass 9:00 Forum 3:30 Breadmakers	9 MAB at GOE Noon Mass	10 8:00 Men's Brkfast 9:00 Altar Guild
11 8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	12	13	14 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	15 7:00 am Mass 9:00 Forum 11:00 Staff Mtg	16 Noon Mass	17 9:00 Altar Guild
18 8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	19 President's Day Office Closed	20 5:00 pm Pancake Supper 6:30 Vestry Mtg	21 7:00 am Mass Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	22 7:00 am Mass 9:00 Forum 11:00 Staff Mtg	23 Noon Mass	24 9:00 Altar Guild
25 8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	26	27	28 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 6:30 Lent Supper 7:30 pm Choir			

Dates to Remember

- February 5-9 Fr. Michael will be at the General Ordination Examination in Texas
- February 8—Breadmakers will meet at 3:30 in the kitchen
- February 10—Men's Breakfast at 8:00 am
- February 15—Spire Deadline
- February 18—Rite 13 Liturgy at 10:15 mass
- February 19—Office Closed for President's Day
- February 20—Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper at 5:00 pm in the parish hall
- February 21—Ash Wednesday
- February 28—Lenten Supper and Program Series begins at 6:30 pm

Notes from the Loft

On *Sunday, February 18* several of Ascension's choir members will be participating in the choral festival, "Rejoice! The Lord Is King," at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. The event is sponsored by the Mark Thallendar Foundation and will feature noted guest conductor Paul Salamunovich, soprano Jessica Rivera, and reader Stephanie Edwards. The festival choir of 900 voices will be comprised of more than thirty-five church choirs primarily from southern California, but extending all the way to Ontario, Canada.

The 7:30 p.m. choral festival will be preceded by:

- 5:30 – carillon concert
- 6:00 – chapel chamber concert
- 6:00 – tour of the cathedral
- 6:30 – The Paulist Scholars
- 6:30 – handbell choir concert
- 7:00 – organ concert by Frederick Swann

There is no admission charge (a freewill offering will be taken), and all are invited to attend.

Looking ahead a bit, you'll want to mark your calendars now for a Lenten Evensong, *Sunday, March 11* at 5 p.m.

—Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

Shrove Tuesday Supper

February 20 5:00—7:00 pm.

Please join us for this annual feast hosted by Ascension's Youth Group. Cost is \$8 for adults, \$5 for children under 7. All proceeds go toward the Youth Group's Capital Fund Drive Contribution.

Lenten Series

This year we will be continuing the tradition of a Wednesday Eucharist at 6pm, followed by a potluck-style soup, salad and bread supper at 6:30. The program which follows at about 7pm is a series asking the question – "Who is Jesus?" Everyone is welcome, and attendance every week, or even at all of the elements of each evening, is not required! We always try to be on our way home by 8:15. The first of our Wednesdays is on February 28th.

Outreach Opportunity

Ascension has the opportunity to serve at the Bad Weather Shelter Friday, February 9 and Friday, February 23. We need volunteers in several different capacities. See the bulletin board for details.

New of Ascensionites

Congratulations to the **Baffes family** on the birth of **Marcus Amir Baffes** born on January 4. Congratulations to **Emily Holl and Nick Keezer** who were married on Saturday, January 20. **Fr. Bob and Elizabeth Delgado** are moving to Pittsburgh end of January. The **Spring Family** is moving to Washington Crossing, Pennsylvania the beginning of February.



*December 31st
Capital Fund
Drive Kick-Off
brunch.*

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

**WORSHIP
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The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

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From the New Sr. Warden Jim Larew

“There is thus no inconsistency between creation and salvation for the One Father has employed the same Agent for both works....” – St. Athanasius, 293 – 373 A.D.

Last year traveling through Italy, Kara and I, in search of Tintoretto’s, stumbled upon the Chapel of St. Athanasius. I bought his book *On the Incarnation* (with a great forward by C.S. Lewis) for the trip home. What’s stuck with me is Athanasius’ view of *salvation*. Here, an early patriarch of the church, a brilliant and devoted man, is offering what he believes to be matter of foremost importance: *salvation = renewal, restoration, and the recovery of creation*.

It doesn’t seem to be the common Christian’s view of salvation. Check your own reactions to the word. What synonyms would you use? I asked a group of friends, and they responded typically: “forgiven,” “atonement,” “saved,” “the kingdom of heaven.” All true, but perhaps incomplete and *impoverished*. Are we missing something? Athanasius would say there is more. And that more is so beautiful and so necessary that it must be *recovered*.

Let’s embrace Athanasius’ abounding concept of *salvation* for our community capital campaign. The *salvation* of our worship space, grounds, and meeting places is a *restoration*. The preservation of Ascension is a *recovery of a great creation* endowed to us by our Ascension mothers and fa-

thers. The improvements will be a *renewal* of our commitment to Christ, our Church, the community and to each other. This *salvation* is *Building on the Vision*.

The *salvation* of our grounds will consume a good deal of my term as Senior Warden, but rest assured, focus on the continued *renewal* of our ministries will bear the equal attention of the Vestry. Vestry members will soon be identified by a picture posted on the parish hall bulletin board. Don’t hesitate to let us know your heart and ideas regarding Ascension. I am fortunate to have had Jean Rowe, Fr. Michael and our 2006 Vestry plow and seed the field for the coming year.

As we leave Epiphany, let’s live the Lenten season allowing something powerful to call us to action. Pray, ponder and plan your commitment to Ascension’s *renewal, restoration, and salvation* for you, your family, and those yet to come.

Through the season of Lent, I’d like to offer everyone at Ascension a “Know Your Senior Warden Lunch.” If you’re in the Downtown L.A. area on a weekday, let me know. We’ll break bread and get to know each other.

P.S. To the Radical Youth of Ascension: Check here for my monthly music/band pick. This month, check out: www.davidcrowderband.com.