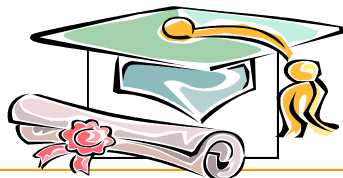


News of Ascensionites

Emily (Holl) Keezer has completed her Masters Degree in Education from Azusa Pacific University. We are so proud of her. Congratulations, Emily!



Bad Weather Shelter

Friday, January 4, 2008 was a very cold and very rainy day. And it was a perfect day for Ascensionites to shop, prepare, and serve dinner for 80 plus homeless people in the Pasadena area. The homeless shelter is located at the Pasadena Covenant Church on North Lake Ave. and is open during the winter. Each night the shelter serves dinner and houses families and single people who are in need. Ascension had over 15 volunteers at the shelter set up sleeping cots and serve a hot meal with cookies for dessert. Monetary donations from the parish made this event possible. Many thanks to all of you who served Jesus and your neighbor.

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

WORSHIP
FORMATION
PASTORAL CARE
FELLOWSHIP
OUTREACH
PRESENCE

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

25 E. Laurel Avenue
Sierra Madre, CA 91024
626-355-1133
www.ascension-sierramadre.com



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
Arcadia, CA
Permit No. 110

Senior Warden's Blog

The year has hardly started and Lent is upon us. All the better to contemplate our New Year's resolutions that may have so soon fallen by the wayside. For what is Lent but a time to contemplate our relationships with God and each other?

Lent originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a time to prepare for Easter through prayer, repentance, self-denial, and charitable giving. In most Christian denominations, Lent is forty days of fasting and prayer starting on Ash Wednesday and ending on Good Friday (Sundays not included). Lent represents, among other things, the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness enduring temptation (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13; source presumably Q; cf. Mark 1:12-13). It is a time for reflection and rededication:

We know the efficacy of

prayer, for if we cannot move mountains, we can lift our spirits and increase our faith as well as the spirits and faith of those around us.

We know the efficacy of repentance, the miraculous healing of admitting wrong and communicating that repentance to those we have hurt.

We know the efficacy of self-denial, whether from not taking another doughnut, or from saving rather than spending our funds.

And we know the efficacy of charitable giving, as evidenced by the outpouring of gifts to Ascension last December.

I see all of the foregoing as part of Stewardship – our role as members of the body of Christ. Lent provides us with an opportunity to be better stewards of our lives, our families, our church, our community, our nation, and our environment. Lent springs up at us and demands that we

reassess our lives and our relationships. It asks us to reflect and commit. Reflection and commitment seem to be in short supply these days - from the media's frenzy for celebrity vapid-ity to politicians who say anything but mean nothing. We can do better, and Lent is the perfect time to start.

You will hear more about stewardship and commitment as the year progresses, and you will have frequent opportunities to enrich your life through each. I am committed to making stewardship a greater part of our lives, not only by assuring fiscal stability, but also through outreach to the greater community and spiritual growth. I cannot do it without you, your ideas, talents, and energy. Please let me or anyone on the Vestry know what needs to be done (but expect to be asked to help us do it).

Yours in Christ,

Ted



The SPIRE

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

FEBRUARY 2008

Worship

Sundays

8am Mass
8:45 Breakfast
9:10 Education
10:15 Mass

Ash Wednesday

7am Mass
Noon Mass
6pm Mass
7:30pm Choir Rehearsal

Wednesdays in Lent

(beginning 2/13/08)
4:30pm Prayer Walk
6:00 Eucharist
6:30 Lenten Supper
7:00 Lenten Series

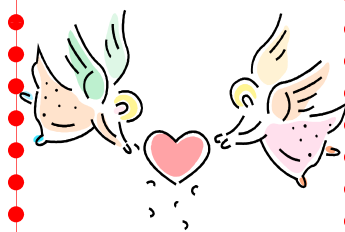
Thursdays

7am Mass

Fridays

12pm Mass

Happy
Valentine's Day



2008 VESTRY OFFICERS

At the organizational meeting of the Vestry, the following members were elected or appointed: Ted Calleton – Sr. Warden, Jean Rowe – Jr. Warden, Rosemary Burnett – Clerk, Lavette Teague – Treasurer.

From the Rector

Recently I went on a short retreat up at Mt. Calvary in Santa Barbara. This is the monastery and retreat house for the monks of the Order of the Holy Cross. I have had a relationship with the brothers since I was in college. (In fact, I asked Debbie out for a first date while we were there on retreat with the college group from UCSB – but that's another story...) This visit I was struck by the realization that the way the monks worship always seems to have changed from the last time I visited. I believe that they make frequent changes because worshipping as often as they do, it is critical to stay "fresh."

Like the monks, my own pattern of devotions has had to change and shift over the years. I see the same dynamic at work in our own parish. While the numbers of folks for whom attendance at a weekday Eucharist is a regular part of their piety has dropped off, there are more people praying in small groups and sharing prayer concerns, some even praying together by means of e-mail. Devotional patterns of communities and individuals need to change and shift to meet changing needs. Consequently, because we have had several weeks go by with no one attending our Wednesday noon mass, we will not be continuing this service. We will still have Eucharist on Wednesdays at 6 pm, Thursdays at 7 am, and Fridays at noon.

As Lent approaches, I am reminded that another form of devotion that used to be a regular part of Fridays in Lent – the Stations of the Cross - was dropped some years ago. (The Stations of the Cross service at noon on Good Friday continues to grow!!!) In an effort to offer something new and different, this Lent on Wednesdays at 4:30 pm, I will lead a short prayer walk around Sierra Madre. It won't be very strenuous or involve great distances (if lucky, we'll get our RDA of 10,000 steps), but

it will happen rain or shine! What you can expect is a walk in the village we serve, talking as we go, to a place or places where we will stop for a short reflection and time of prayer. We'll be back at the church before the 6 pm Eucharist. And who knows? Maybe this walk will take on a life of its own and we'll continue the devotion beyond Easter.

This Lent, I invite you to consider your own devotions. What needs to change? What needs to shift? How will you grow?

MAB+



Prayer Book 101 2008 Lenten Series

The Lenten Series this year will be a study of our prayer book. This series will include a history of the Anglican prayer book, the changes from prayer book to prayer book and what precipitated these changes, a look at the contents of our current prayer book, and how to use the prayer book for both public and private worship. This series is also the ideal opportunity to ask those questions you have always had about the prayer book but never had the chance to ask.

The prayer book series begin Wednesday February 13th from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. in the church and continues through March 12th. Come for Eucharist at 6:00, potluck meatless supper – soup or salad – at 6:30, and the prayer book series at 7:00. Also remember our newly added Lenten walk and prayer through Sierra Madre with Father Michael beginning at 4:30 in front of the church.

Ascension Youth Group

30-Hour Famine

What is the 30-Hour Famine?

On Friday-Saturday, February 22-23, the Youth Group has a special opportunity for spiritual growth and outreach during the Lenten Season. Several members of the Youth Group have already committed to fasting for a 30-hour period, promising to "be hungry" while learning about world hunger throughout the world. The participating Youth Group members will be raising funds for World Vision, an organization committed to fighting hunger throughout the world.

We have several activities planned throughout the week-end. The Youth Group will together plan and carry out a community service project in Sierra Madre, helping to feed hungry people right here in L.A. County. We will together spend time doing an art project to show the church what we have done to help hungry people. We will learn about what God and the church have to teach us about world hunger and what we can do as Christians to help. After a special Mass performed by Father Michael on Saturday evening, we will break our 30 hours of fasting with a delicious and healthy meal.

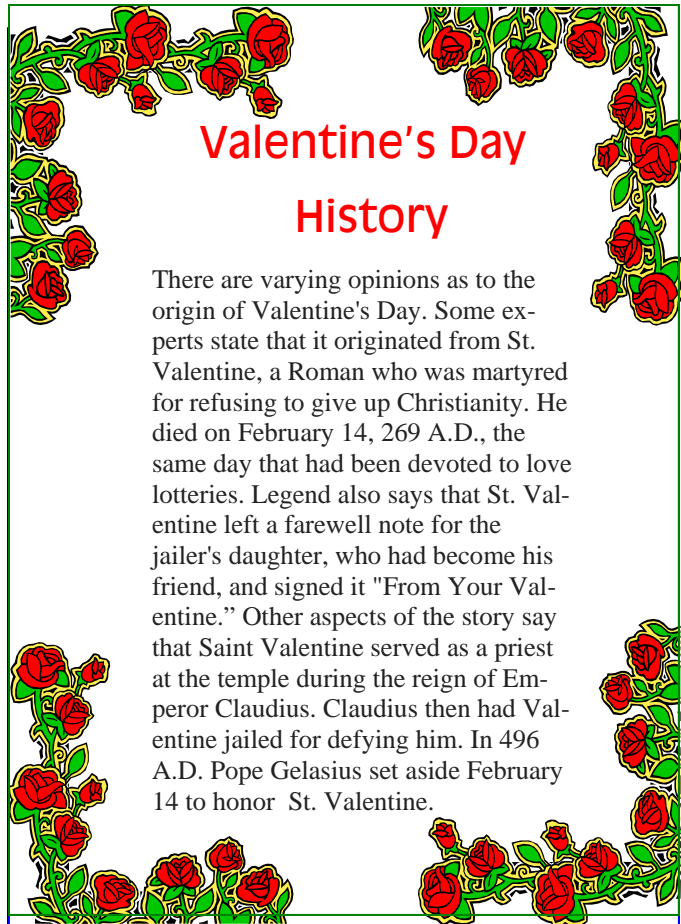
How you can support our youth!

You can help in several ways:

- 1.) Volunteer to come and help out for a couple of hours during the Famine. We are doing a variety of activities, and your presence and support let the youth know you stand behind their commitment. Sign up in the Parish Hall.
- 2.) Nourish our youth. Sign up to help prepare Saturday's "Break-Fast." Or, make a donation of water or juice to sustain the Youth Group members during their fast. Check out the posterboard in the Parish Hall to sign up.
- 3.) Find a youth group member and make a donation. Just \$30 feeds one child in a third world country for a month.

The Youth are looking forward to this special weekend, participating in fellowship, outreach, and spiritual growth. We thank you for your support!

Many thanks,
Allison



Valentine's Day History

There are varying opinions as to the origin of Valentine's Day. Some experts state that it originated from St. Valentine, a Roman who was martyred for refusing to give up Christianity. He died on February 14, 269 A.D., the same day that had been devoted to love lotteries. Legend also says that St. Valentine left a farewell note for the jailer's daughter, who had become his friend, and signed it "From Your Valentine." Other aspects of the story say that Saint Valentine served as a priest at the temple during the reign of Emperor Claudius. Claudius then had Valentine jailed for defying him. In 496 A.D. Pope Gelasius set aside February 14 to honor St. Valentine.

Current Small Groups

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

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

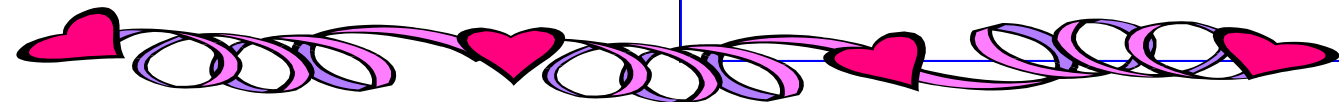
A Study of Psalms – Meets Sundays from 9 – 10 am in the Parish House. Leaders: Mandy McIntosh & Joy Barry

A Study of the current Sunday's lessons – 9am – 10am. For those who would like an extra opportunity to deepen their understanding of Scripture during the Lenten season, Fr. Larson will be meeting in the library between services to consider the particular lesson for each of the Sundays in Lent. You can drop in as you can or come for the whole season.

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

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

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



NOTES FROM THE LOFT

It hardly seems possible that Epiphany is ending and we're preparing for Lent (I'm still putting away all my Christmas CD's!), but indeed, that time is upon us. February is ushered in by Transfiguration, for which the choir will be presenting K. Lee Scott's exciting "The Glory of Christ." We'll also sing our final "Alleluias" before Lent with Mozart's "Canon of Praise" during communion.

During the rest of February our music, in its entirety, will assume a more subdued tone in keeping with the penitential spirit of Lent. That is not to say that it won't be gorgeous – indeed, I trust it will – but nevertheless more meditative in nature.

I'd like to express my deep gratitude to all of you for your prayers and well wishes during my recent wrist surgery and recuperative period – these meant a great deal to me. From all indications the surgery seems to have been a complete success; while it will take some time for total recovery, I must say that it's wonderful to

be back with you and to be back at the console, once again.

I close with an announcement:

The choir still is in need of one more tenor to complete our ensemble – please contact me if you're interested;

Lenten blessings to each of you ~

Debora Huffman

Director of Music and Organist



GET IT RIGHT

Who do you call reverend and how reverend is that person? If we go back to the Middle Ages, the term referred to the clergy with a built-in hierarchy. If a priest was just "The Reverend," he was only a part of the parish clergy; if he was "The Very Reverend," he was a Dean of the Cathedral. If he was the "Right Reverend," he was the Diocesan Bishop; and if he was "The Most Reverend," he is the Presiding Bishop of the Church in America. This later title was a 20th century addition. Members of more egalitarian American denominations have asked if that didn't "reflect wishful thinking and suppressed desires more than reality." Our rector is properly The Very Reverend since he is a Dean of our Diocesan Cathedral and leader of our convocation.

Attention Ascension Youth

30-Hour Famine

Friday and Saturday, February 22-23

Meet at 6:30pm on Friday

Stay at the church overnight, for a whole day of fellowship, spiritual growth, outreach, friendship, and fun. Parents pick up youth from church at 7:30pm on Saturday.

Christmas Afghan Winner

Debora Huffman was the lucky winner to receive the Christmas Afghan; the winning ticket was drawn on Sunday, December 23, 2007. The raffle was sponsored by St. Mary's Guild.

Congratulations, Debora!

