

Shrove Tuesday and our annual tradition of the Shrove Tuesday

Pancake Supper is coming up February 16th. The supper will be from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. There is a sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall for those who will be attending. The cost is \$6.00 for adults, \$4.00 for children 12 and under, or \$20.00 per family. The funds raised for the Supper will be used to fund the Bad Weather Shelter in Pasadena, as is our tradition. The supper will be a lot of fun as always. Hope to see you there!



The All Parish Bad Weather Shelter Dinner



is on **February 16**. If you'd like to help with serving, please add your name to the **sign-up sheet** provided in the Parish Hall. We need about 6 to 12 people at the shelter to **set up the cots**, organize and **serve the dinner**, and to **clean-up**. If you can't be there in person but would like to **support the effort** financially, write a check to "Church of the Ascension" marked "Bad Weather Shelter Dinner" and put it in the offering plate, or turn it in to Jean Rowe, Father Bamberger, or Ted Calleton.

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



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FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT AT ASCENSION

Come one, come all! Bring your children, your spouses, your friends and family and watch the wonderful movie "UP" on Sunday, March 7, 2010 at 5:00 pm in the Parish Hall. Hot dogs, popcorn, soda, candy, etc. will be available for a small fee. All proceeds will go to the water well fund.

This fund raiser will give everyone of all ages an opportunity to participate in raising money for a well which will benefit a village of all ages in a place many, many miles away.

If you and the kids want to get comfy on the floor, bring a blanket or sleeping bag and a pillow. A sign-up sheet for this event is on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall.

2010 Officers of the Vestry

At the organizational meeting of the Vestry, the following members were elected or appointed:

Ted Calleton – Sr. Warden Jean Rowe – Jr. Warden
Cameron Cox – Clerk of the Vestry
Lavette Teague – Treasurer Mike Beach – Verger



There's still time to flock, be flocked, or to buy insurance. See any member of the Youth Group for more information. (Your donations will go to World Vision Hunger Relief.)



Parish Phone/Email Tree Ministry Needs Assessment Form

The Phone Tree Ministry Committee is working on improving and expanding the communication network at Ascension. In order to do this, we need your input on which form of information works best for you so that you can quickly get information relating to the church and its activities.



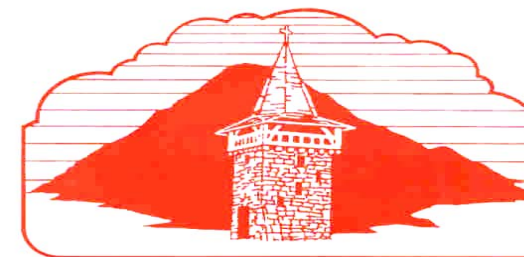
Those who attended the Annual Meeting filled out a form that provides the data we need to create a system that will meet everyone's needs. But we cannot meet everyone's needs unless everyone fills out this form. If you were unable to attend the meeting, you can pick up a form from one of the ushers before the Sunday service begins and return the completed form as you leave the church. If you wish to fill out the form later, leave the form in the church office or give your responses to Karen Mooradian, Jennifer Jesser or Beth Kellock. Thank you for helping us!



Youth Group 30-Hour Famine

What is the 30-Hour Famine?

On Friday-Saturday, February 26 & 27, 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.



The **SPIRE**

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

February, 2010

Worship

Sundays

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

Wednesday

6:00pm Mass
Wednesdays in Lent
(beginning 2/24/10)
6:00 Eucharist
6:30 Lenten Supper
7:00 Lenten Series

Thursday

7:00 am Mass

Friday

12:00 Mass

From the Rector

This year's Wednesday evening Lenten series will be focusing on Outreach. Essentially, Outreach is the way that we extend our ministries beyond the corner of Baldwin and Laurel Avenues. It is the way that we live out our baptismal promises in our daily lives.

Members of Ascension are involved in many forms of Outreach at many different levels. In some cases, Outreach is hands on ministry serving others. Outreach can also mean giving money to support ministry to others either close at home or far away.

Each Wednesday evening in Lent (starting February 24th), we will begin with Eucharist at 6 pm, have a simple Soup and Salad Potluck, and hear from a speaker from one of the several ways Ascension is involved in Outreach. We look forward to hearing from representatives from Friends In Deed, Episcopal Relief and Development, the County Facilities Chaplaincies, local officials, and other Outreach endeavors.

It is my belief that we best show God's love to the world when we serve others. Some are calling this needs based evangelism. We spread the Good News in the world when we are responsive to the real needs and hurts that people have. As St. Francis is reported to have said – "Preach the Gospel always – only use words if necessary." Christ's love is best made known when Christ's People reach out and open their hands in love.

Yours in Christ, MAB+

see B. D. Howes or Carol George.

In the near future we are going to be dividing the Board into three sections – The Church Expectant, The Church Militant, and The Church Victorious. These are three traditional terms for the membership of the Church at any given time. The Expectant refers to those who are to come – the yet-to-be-born or baptized. The Militant refers to those of us who are alive and active here on earth, and the Victorious refers to those who have died and are with God. We'll have a section on one side of the picture board with photos of our newborns and expectant parents. The middle will be for our current parishioners, and finally, we'll have a section for those in our parish who have recently died.

Another Way To Add Meaning To Your Lenten Devotions.

Want to do something more this Lent? Consider joining a small group for Bible study, fellowship, and prayer. New study topics are beginning between services in the Parish House. On February 14, join the discussion of My Peace I Give You—a look at the gospel according to John chapters 11-21 or beginning on February 21, study the topic Relating to Others As Jesus Would. If you prefer a totally different study topic every Sunday, join Lectio Divina on February 7th and use an ancient spiritual practice to examine a different scripture selection each Sunday. The Lectio group plans to meet in the library. Sunday doesn't work for you? Rector's Forum meets Thursday mornings at 9:00 in the Rector's Office. Currently this group is discussing ways they might answer the questions which were asked of seminarians on the 2010 General Ordination Examination. Spending an hour of your time once a week in a small group is one way you can make this Lent more meaningful for you.

A New Theme for the Parishioner Picture Board

For several years, we have had a bulletin board in the Parish Hall dedicated to the photographs of our parishioners. It has been a handy alternative to a Photo Directory, and many of our folks have commented on how helpful it is to be able to go over and finally put a name to a familiar face. We are encouraging everyone to make sure that your picture is available to put up on the board. If you'd like to have your picture taken, please

St. Valentine
♥♥♥♥

SENIOR WARDEN'S BLOG

As the Vestry begins its new administrative year (February 1 to January 31 – the measure of an annual term for Vestry members), it is appropriate to revisit Ascension's leadership structure. This structure has three "legs:" the Staff, the Vestry, and the Parish Ministry Council (PMC). Each has specific responsibilities.

The Staff consists of our clergy, our administrator, the Verger, the Parish Connector, the Welcome Ministry Leader, and the Wardens. It is primarily responsible for the liturgy, clergy pastoral care, and communication with the parish, as well as the day to day matters of administration. The Staff meets bi-weekly to review the church calendar and to report on and assign clergy tasks such as pastoral care visits and responsibility for saying mass. The bi-weekly meetings also review administrative matters needing attention and assign responsibility for accomplishing those matters. The Staff's primary focus is the religious work of our clergy, and the lay members of the Staff play a supporting role.

The Vestry is our "board of directors." It consists of nine elected Vestry members and the Rector, who is the president of our corporation. The Vestry is responsible for the financial stability of the parish, for long range planning, and for managing our plant and property (a responsibility delegated, in part, to our Verger). The Vestry functions through its committees: budget, investment, audit, annual giving, long range planning, legacy giving, buildings and grounds, administration, insurance, legal, and ministry of thanks.

The third leg is our Parish Ministry Council. The PMC is responsible for Ascension's programs. It has six primary areas of responsibility: worship, pastoral care, outreach, formation, presence, and fellowship. Each of those areas in turn functions through sub-committees: for example, worship embraces the Altar Guild, the acolytes, ushers/presenters, chalice bearers, and readers, as well as the bread makers, choir, and wedding guild. Pastoral Care embraces Funeral Ministry, Keeping Connected, Lay Eucharistic Visitors, Letter Writers, Pet Assisted Therapy, and Stephens Ministry. Formation includes our small groups, adult and youth Christian education, Daughters of the King, and the Rector's Forum. Outreach focuses on contributing to ECPAC by occasionally staffing the bad weather shelter, providing Thanksgiving dinner for the women's room, our monthly food ingathering for the food distribution center, and contributions to the getting ready for school drive, and on Friends Outside, the Monrovia Mission, and the United Thank Offering. Outreach also acts through use of the parish house and parish hall for weddings, AA, Alanon, other community events, and by parishioners participating in the life of our near and greater community. Presence includes our Archives and History Committee, the Memorial

Garden Committee, photography, our website, The Spire, Welcome Ministry, publicity, and the maintenance of our buildings and grounds (and our work days). Fellowship handles the coffee hours, Meals Ministry, St. Mary's Guild, receptions, the Special Events Committee, Weekly Dinner Group, and the Couples Dinner Group. As we transition from a priest centered church to a program oriented church, the work of the PMC becomes more and more important.

You will immediately notice areas of apparent overlap - for example, the clergy and the worship committee, or presence and buildings and grounds. Rather than overlap, however, it is, ideally, a division of responsibilities. The worship committee supports our clergy as they lead us through the liturgy; the Staff assigns the weekly tasks needed for carrying out those responsibilities. Presence supports the other areas of the PMC, while the Building and Grounds Committee of the Vestry budgets the money for maintenance and repairs or solicits the congregation for funds for specific projects like the tree/floor fund.

Communication within the greater community is also a responsibility of the PMC, which has publicity as an adjunct part of its mission. Communication within the parish is part of Presence and is a responsibility shared by the Staff and Wardens. Moreover, communication within and without the church is the responsibility of us all. Unfortunately, much of our communication has been weak and has often been replaced by gossip (or no communication at all). We are attempting to address this weakness by assigning specific responsibilities to various PMC groups. For example, the phone tree has been assigned to Pastoral Care, and the web site to Presence. Both are still works in progress. More importantly, we need parishioners to verify the validity of information that they hear about aspects of the church by contacting one of the Wardens, the Verger, the Parish Administrator, or Father Michael. We also need to increase participation in communication by the members of the parish. One of the best ways to do this is by writing articles about church activities for the Spire.

We have a long way to go to become a functioning program church. But considering our recent change in emphasis (and establishment of the PMC), we have made remarkable progress. Further progress will depend on the commitment of the parish which, of course, means giving time, talent, and treasure. Each of those three offerings is equal in value, and each may be done independently of the others. Please search your hearts for ways in which you may contribute to furthering our mission and provide today for those who will follow Christ tomorrow. We need your participation.

Yours in Christ, Ted

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Last month I encouraged each of you to consider singing in the choir for a new year's resolution. While this admonition still stands, I'd like to identify two additional music program needs:

*A volunteer to record the 10:15 services and special services, such as Evensong or Christmas Eve. Over the past (almost) ten years, much wonderful music-making has occurred at Ascension; it's a shame that all of it can be recaptured only in our memories. How marvelous it would be to preserve our music for encore enrichment and enjoyment! In addition, recording complete services may be of interest to those unable to attend because of health reasons. Please let me know if you have an interest in this project.

*Continued monetary support of the music program. This past year parishioners generously provided support for our Easter and Christmas music. Funding once again is needed for the special music needs of this season's Easter and Evensong. Please designate your checks for the "music fund," and I thank you in advance for your support.

February 20, 1887 was the birth date of David McK. Williams, the composer of one of this month's anthems: "In the Year that King Uzziah Died." While you're still wondering about this unusual title, I encourage you to read Isaiah 6:1-8, the Old Testament lesson for February 7. The musical setting of this text is guaranteed to touch you, even possibly to lead you into a deeper relationship with our Lord.

This year Valentine's Day happens to be the last Sunday after Epiphany – and our last Sunday of "Alleluia" until Easter. Join us for Jane Marshall's "My Eternal King" and Mozart's "Canon of Praise." The second half of the month our music will reflect the season of Lent.

Organ playing is the manifestation of a will filled with the vision of eternity. – Charles-Marie Widor

Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

DISCERNING GOD'S WILL: Do you ever wonder what God wants you to do? Come learn about an ancient spiritual practice where we come together to (1) quiet our minds so we can HEAR God, (2) read aloud God's WORD, (3) pay attention to what God is saying to ME, and (4) discern what God wants me to DO. Introductory Session, *Lectio Divina*, 9:10 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 7, Library, Parish Hall.

Verger's Work Party

There will be a parish work day on Saturday, February 6th. 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.

LADIES OF ST. MARY

At the meeting of St. Mary's Guild on January 23, 2010, members voted to discontinue St. Mary's Guild, close its checking account and CD, and move all its funds into the Church's account under the heading of "Hospitality."

Many of the women still enjoy the fellowship and luncheons; therefore, this group has decided they will become "The Ladies of St. Mary," a women's group that will meet four times a year for a potluck luncheon and fellowship. The luncheons will be hosted each quarter by a member, either at her home or in the Parish Hall. The hostess will be responsible for setting the date (within that quarter), providing a notice in the Spire, and sending reminders to the women of the parish via e-mail and/or telephone calls. All women of the Church of Ascension are welcome to join these luncheons and to bring a friend!

This new group will continue to be part of the Fellowship Ministry.

Respectfully, Lisa Reed, Fellowship Ministry Leader

CHEF'S DINNER 2010

Fellowship and Fundraising for the Well Outreach Project

Save the Date: **March 23**

It was a night to remember last time; let's do it again! Chef **Claud Beltran** is coming back to Ascension for another multi-course and multi-wine feast event! Last time was extraordinary; how to top it? Focusing on our Outreach efforts, **Gil Garcetti**, former LA District Attorney turned acclaimed photographer, will give a talk on the need for clean water in underdeveloped countries. Gil has been very involved with a charity that builds wells in West Africa and will describe how just one well can change the life of an entire village.

Tickets will be available in late February, but please mark your calendars in advance! This is an exciting opportunity to combine fund-raising for a worthy cause with having fun, and we hope to see you there!

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

There are still opportunities to donate flowers and sanctuary candles in memory of or in thanksgiving for loved ones or for special events in our lives. Please check the sign-up sheets in the Parish Hall for available dates and sign up. Checks for flower donations should be made payable to St. Anne's Altar Guild. Checks for sanctuary candles should be made payable to Episcopal Church of the Ascension. All checks may be placed in the offering plate or turned in to the Parish Administrator.