



The SPIRE

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

January 2006

Our Core Ministries

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

Annual Meeting

Sunday, January 22

5:00 in the evening

Followed by parish potluck

Sign up sheet will be available on the bulletin board starting January 8

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✝ From the Rector

“It was the best Christmas pageant ever!” I’m sure we’ll hear those words repeated in the weeks to come. The sheer number of kids involved have made this a wonderful witness to the vitality of our parish. Our parish has long tried to be inclusive of people of all ages, but to be truly child-friendly is a challenge. I have to commend all of our parishioners who have opened their hearts to the kids in our midst. Indeed, even our quiet, meditative eight o’clock service enjoys the sounds of youthful “activity.” But we wouldn’t really want it any other way. In a dramatic way, the children of the parish have presented the Christmas story to us this year. But every Sunday they witness to us the Gospel truth about the Kingdom of God. We serve Christ here today for those who will come after us. These kids are close on our heels. I



really do look forward to the day when Dan Koerber, Elliot Brunwin and Devon Nardoni might be vestry members, when Robbie Nardoni might be singing in the choir, and one or more of our kids might become priests to serve the Church of tomorrow.

—Father Michael

P.S. – On behalf of the clergy, I want to thank everyone for their generosity to us this Christmas.

Serving on the Vestry

Each year at our Annual Meeting, the parish elects a new class of vestry members – this year we will be electing three persons for regular three year terms, and one person to fill a two-year term to replace Les Atchely who moved away this fall. The “job description” includes being a committed member of the parish who is regular in attendance and giving and who is willing to offer his or her gifts for the leadership of this parish. Vestry members may have particular responsibilities or portfolios and will be serving on such subcommittees as Finance, Insurance, and Operations

& Property. Meetings are held monthly, and attendance at the annual workday/retreat is critical. So far, the following parishioners have agreed to run – Liz Delgado, Jim Larew and Rosemary Burnett. A fourth person is giving prayerful consideration. As always, there will be the opportunity to make nominations from the floor during the Annual Meeting. Persons interested in serving on the vestry can contact Rob Stockly or Fr. Bamberger.

Youth Happenings

Since December had been a very busy month for the youth, we are slowing things down just a bit to catch your breath and be ready for the All-Parish Retreat in January. Please note that our Sunday Morning Meetings will be happening on **January 8th-January 22nd**. The subject will be on "Christ in our lives." There will be games, bible study, group discussions and more!! We will also be planning our Youth Calendar for 2006 with your input. Please make a commitment to being there, your presence is very important.

Sunday, January 1st—College Alumni & Youth Leaders Reunion and Luncheon Reception, 12:00 PM -1:00 PM

Friday-Sunday, January 27-29—All Parish Retreat at Camp Stevens. All youth are encouraged to attend this special weekend.

Catechesis Wants You!!

Our parish is in need of Catechists for level I. We have a very special opportunity locally for two adults to train to be a Catechist for 3-6 year old children of our parish. There will be a Level I Formation Course happening for ten Saturdays once a month, starting in January. This is for those who really wish to be involved in the spiritual formation of our young children on Sunday mornings. The training will be held at Church of the Angels, Pasadena.

If you are interested in this wonderful opportunity and feel called to participate, please contact Cameron Cox, Elizabeth Wilson or Diane Rhodus, our Ministry Coordinator as soon as possible.

Small Groups

The ministry of small groups expresses several important values of our congregational life. Among these are Fellowship/Caring, Bible Study, and Mission.

Fellowship/Caring: This value within each small group is expressed when members of the group set aside time to intentionally pray for one another, to develop relationships with one another through Christ.

Bible Study: This value is experienced in scripture study. Asking and answering questions about a portion of scripture – What does it say? What does it mean? How do I apply this to my life?

Mission: This important value is evidenced when newcomers are invited and welcomed into each group and groups share their Christian love through outreach ministries.

Small groups help us to meet the needs of all of us at Ascension today and help prepare us to receive those whom God will send to us tomorrow. All are invited and encouraged to become a part of a small group. Please see Halcyon Koerber or Diane Rhodus, Ministry Coordinator, for more information.

—Halcyon Koerber

St. Mary's Guild

St. Mary's Guild's next meeting will be a potluck lunch on Saturday, February 11 at 11:30 a.m. in the parish hall. The lucky winner of the Christmas afghan was Suzanne Pouteau.

—Ann Poland

Annual Reports

Annual Reports from Wardens, Guilds, Vestry Members, Staff etc. are due to the office no later than January 9 to be included in the Annual Report.

Please email your report as an attachment in WORD format, if possible, to parish@ascension-sierramadre.com. Thank you!

January 2006

Upcoming Dates

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:00 Mass 10:15 Mass Noon Alumni	2 Office Closed	3 6:30 Vestry Mtg.	4 10:30 Staff Mtg Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	5 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	6 Epiphany Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass	7 8:00 LEM Mtg 9:00 Altar Guild
8 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	9 Annual Reports Due	10	11 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	12 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	13 Noon Mass	14 9:00 Altar Guild
15 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	16 MLK Day Office Closed	17	18 10:30 Staff Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	19 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	20 Noon Mass	21 9:00 Altar Guild
22 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass 5:00 Ann. Mtg.	23	24	25 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	26 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	27 Parish Retreat Noon Mass	28 Parish Retreat 9:00 Altar Guild
29 Retreat 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	30	31				

- January 1—Mass at 8:00 & 10:15, No Education Hour. Youth Alumni Reception at Noon
- January 2—Office Closed for New Year's
- January 6—Epiphany, Mass at Noon and 6:00 p.m.
- January 7—LEM Breakfast and meeting
- January 9—Annual Reports due
- January 16—Office Closed for Martin Luther King Day
- January 22—Annual Meeting at 5:00 p.m. with potluck dinner
- January 27-28—Parish Retreat

Notes from the Loft

Yes, indeed, you did hear some extra bells this Christmas! Our newly-installed zimbelstern was premiered, enhancing the season's festive spirit. New Century Products of San Diego states the following on-line:

"The zimbelstern is a musical instrument which rings small bells at random as an accompaniment to organ music. The zimbelstern (also spelled cymbalstern) has been used for centuries in devotional music. The word zimbelstern means "cymbal-star". In fact, the original zimbelsterns were made in the shape of a star with small bells at each point. The star was turned, either manually or pneumatically, and the bells were struck by stationary clappers mounted around the star. Modern zimbelsterns are elec-

trically operated. The bells do not rotate. Instead, a rotating device in the center strikes the bells."

Traditionally the zimbelstern is played not only at Christmas but also throughout the year for special effects with appropriate music. I hope you enjoyed the zimbelstern this Christmas season and will continue to do so as it enriches our worship in future months and years.

Circle the date: Sunday, February 26. Plan on attending Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs at the Cathedral of our Lady of the Angels. Ascension's own Parish Choir will be participating in the festival chorus, which should be truly exciting! Watch for more details in next month's Spire.

—Debora Huffman
Organist/Choirmaster

Parish Retreat

REMINDER: All-Parish Retreat dates are Friday, January 27th-Sunday, January 29th. Being our first effort, the more participants the better our experience. The setting is beautiful and our time at Camp Stevens will be too, if you are with us! Questions?? Ask Father Bamberger, Deacon Barrett, Mother Beal, Beth Smith-Kellock, Christina Ortega or Diane Rhodus. We are all listed in the parish directory.

LEM January Meeting

Please note all of those who are Lay Eucharistic Ministers, that there will be a special Kick-off meeting to start the New Year off on Saturday morning, January 7th at 8:00 AM. It will be led by Deacon Barrett. Breakfast will be served, including an omelet bar. If you would like to know more about the meeting or about the Lay Eucharistic ministry and its importance to our parish, please contact Deacon Barrett.

New of Ascensionites

Congratulations to **Chip (Chris) Lindsey** upon receiving his Ph.D. in Chemistry from UCSB November 22, 2005. (There is a picture on bulletin board in parish hall)

Congratulations to **Mary Baffes** on her induction into the Sisters of Joanna Chapter of the Order of the Daughters of the King.

Angels Pictured from left to right are : Lily Anderson, Emma Allen, Susan Harrison, Devon Nardoni, and Riley Worley.



The Episcopal Church of the Ascension



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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**

From the Sr. Warden

Although I am still trying to figure what exactly a Senior Warden does, it has been very gratifying to watch at close hand as the congregation of Church of the Ascension continues to grow and parish makes steady progress towards a stronger financial position. We may not turn the corner as quickly as Reggie Bush (couldn't resist), but we are definitely headed in a very good direction and are poised to address some issues such as improved pathways and landscaping and repairs to the parish house that have been deferred.

I am also encouraged with the level the active participation of both longtime and rela-

tively new parishioners. One of the truly great things about living in Sierra Madre is that one can make a positive impact on our town as soon as one is willing to get informed and involved. The same is definitely true within Church of the Ascension. At the December Parish Ministry Council meeting, we learned about more than 20 spiritual gifts that one might possess. In the coming months, this Council will keep getting the word out about the range of opportunities to serve God in ways that matter to the ministries of Church of the Ascension through gifts with which we may not have realized we been graced.

In addition, the Vestry decided at their annual retreat in November to create several committees to support Canon Michael, the clergy and staff in the operation of the parish.

2006 can be a wonderful year in the life of Church of the Ascension. There is a t-shirt that says it just right - "Life is good. Get out." So as my last conspicuous act as Senior Warden, I invite you all to attend the Annual Parish meeting on January 22nd, get informed and get involved in the service of God.

—Rob Stockly