



# The SPIRE

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

January 2007

## Our Core Ministries

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

## Exciting Times...

Youth Retreats Planned:  
Rite 13 Jan 12-15  
Sr. High Feb 17-19

See Diane Rhodus for  
more information and to  
sign up for the retreat.

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## ✝ From the Rector

This past December 20<sup>th</sup>, I marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of being ordained to the priesthood. I couldn't help but look back some, give thanks for the present, and muse about the future.

I was ordained to the priesthood out in Needles on a Sunday evening, so that I could celebrate Christmas Eucharist with my congregation. While the congregation was small, the building seemed full with visiting family and friends. Even my maternal grandparents were there. I can't help thinking that if I had known then what I know now, some of the mistakes I made as a young priest could have been averted. But then we often learn more from our mistakes than we do from our successes.

I am very thankful for the ministry we all share here today at Ascension. Christmas is always a time to be thankful, and I am truly grateful for all of the efforts of everyone who worked so hard at our wonderful celebration of the Nativity. Between Karen in the office, my

clergy colleagues, the Altar Guild, Deb Huffman and our gifted musicians, and everyone else who pitched in, this has been a very special year. As always, I am struck by and thankful for the extraordinary generosity of this parish towards me and towards all of your clergy.

The years ahead of ordained ministry hold much in the way of opportunity. This spring, I am planning to attend once again a CREDO conference. CREDO is a program sponsored by the Church Pension Fund to help Clergy assess their lives in four particular aspects – financial, physical, spiritual and vocational. It helps us discern where and how God is calling us and asks us to plan for the next phase of our life. When I attended CREDO last in 2001, I came away with a sense of commitment to “grow in place.” Since then, I believe we all have grown – the parish has grown, I have grown, and life is good.

And I am very thankful.

—Fr. Michael

## Field Trip to the Getty

"Holy Image, Hallowed Ground," an extraordinary exhibition of icons from St. Catherine's Monastery, Mt. Sinai, is the destination of an upcoming parish field trip to the Getty Center. Plans are being finalized for a guided tour on a Saturday morning--for updates, please check the Ascension website (www.ascension-sierramadre.com). The

Getty show is a rare opportunity to see these holy images outside St. Catherine's, the oldest monastery in the world, home of the largest collection of icons in the world. For details, please contact Barbara Larson (jmlarson@earthlink.net), or Halcyon Koerber (chriskoerber@earthlink.net).

—Barbara Larson

# January 28<sup>th</sup> - Ascension's Potluck and Annual Meeting

One of the items of business at our Annual Meeting on January 28th is the election of new Vestry members. This year we will be electing four new members to the Vestry rather than our customary three as Liz Delgado and Father Bob are moving to Pittsburg the middle of January. Three of those elected that evening will serve three year terms; Liz's replacement will serve a two year term with the option of serving an additional three years. By biblical tradition, the two year member is determined by a toss of the dice at the Vestry's organizational meeting directly following the Annual Meeting.



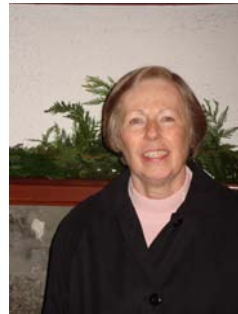
I am pleased to share with you the names of this year's slate of nominees: Curt Baffes, Scott Callahan, Beverly Clifton, and Adela Gomez. Let me tell you a bit about them.

Curt and his wife Mary began attending Ascension three years ago when they moved to Altadena from the mid-West. Curt and Mary were active in college ministry at the University of Illinois. Since college their church has always been an important part of their lives. Curt is an engineer at JPL – a real rocket scientist. While Curt has many wonderful talents and gifts, many of us tend to think of him as Elijah's Daddy. Curt, Mary, Elijah and Elijah's soon to arrive sibling primarily attend the 10:15 service.



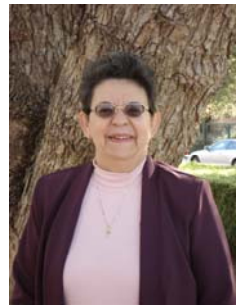
Although he is still a relatively young man, Scott Callahan has been a member of our parish for over thirty years. Scott was active in Ascension's youth group. He served as acolyte all through high school and part of college. After some time away from Ascension attaining a degree in architecture, marrying, and starting a family, Scott and Elizabeth returned to Ascension when they

moved to Monrovia. Scott brings not just an architect's eye for preserving and improving our buildings but also a passion for our church. Scott, Elizabeth and Phillip primarily attend the 10:15 service.



Beverly Clifton is a long time member of Ascension. She and her late husband Paul raised their two children in our parish. Over the years Beverly has served as an Acolyte Mom, Parish Treasurer, member of Altar Guild, and now as Altar Guild Treasurer. Beverly's family has a long tradition of Vestry service. Paul served as both Junior and Senior Warden, their son

Alan was elected to Vestry some time ago, and their daughter Susan is currently on Vestry. We think it's time for Beverly to take her turn. Beverly is the manager of a family owned income tax firm. She attends the 8:00 a.m. service.



Adela Gomez came originally from Cuba. She and her husband Fernando have served in our diocese for many years, primarily at St. Mary Magdalene in Glendale. Adela has been actively involved in the diocesan Cursillo movement. Her skills as translator are frequently used by the diocese. Adela and Fernando have attended Ascension for the past three years - ever since Fernando's retirement. Adela currently works as a translator in the Los Angeles County Court System. She has two children and several grandchildren. Adela and Father Gomez usually attend the 10:15 service.

*Note: As always, nominations for Vestry can be made from the floor.*

—Jean Rowe, Sr. Warden

## Did you Know???

Two women are in training to become members of our Daughters of the King chapter.

## Gift Survey

Have you completed the Gift Survey yet?. Completing these surveys help us determine the task that is just right for each person.

## Kitchen Mystery!!

Almost all of our dish towels have mysteriously disappeared. Please donate a towel or two to replace these missing items. Thank you.

## St. Mary's Guild

St. Mary's Guild will meet on Saturday, January 13, 2007 at 11:30 a.m. in the parish hall for a potluck lunch. All women are welcome and encouraged to attend. We will be making plans for 2007 activities.

—Ann Poland, President

# January 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2	3 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	4 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	5 Noon Mass	6 9:00 am Epiphany Mass 9:00 am Altar Guild
7 8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass Noon PMC Mtg	8 Annual Report Deadline	9	10 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	11 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum 11:00 am Staff Mtg	12 Noon Mass	13 8:00 Men's Brkfst 9:00 am Altar Guild 11:30 am St. Mary's
14 8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	15 Spire Deadline MLK Day Office Closed	16 6:30 pm Vestry Mtg	17 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	18 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	19 Noon Mass	20 9:00 am Altar Guild
21 8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	22	23	24 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	25 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum 11:00 am Staff Mtg	26 Noon Mass	27 9:00 am Altar Guild
28 8:00 am Mass 9:00 am Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass 5:00 Annual Mtg	29	30	31 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir			

## Important Dates

- January 1—New Year's Day  
Office Closed
- January 6—Epiphany Mass at  
9:00 am
- January 7—Parish Ministry  
Council Meeting at Noon
- January 8—Annual Reports  
due
- January 13—Men's Breakfast  
and Work Party at 8:00 am;  
St. Mary's Guild Potluck at  
11:30 am
- January 15—Office Closed for  
MLK Day; Spire Deadline
- January 16—Vestry Meeting at  
6:30 pm in the library
- January 28—Annual Meeting  
and Potluck at 5:00 pm in the  
parish hall

## Notes from the Loft

Throughout the year I'm ever appreciative of the gift of song our choir members bring to our worship services – but never more so than during the holidays. My sincere gratitude to each of our choristers for their wonderful music-making, particularly on Christmas Eve and at our festival New Year's Eve service! Thanks also to Allison Rainey for her Dvorak Advent solo – and wasn't it great to have Sean Dougall back with us during December!

This month we bid a fond farewell to Liz Delgado and her family, who are relocating to Pittsburgh. Liz has been a valued member of the choir for several years and will truly be missed – Liz, you go with our love and all good wishes for much happiness in your new life out East. God speed!

Liz's departure prompts the

call for someone to fill her choir seat. If one of your New Year's resolutions was to give more service to the church, I encourage you to consider the choir in your thinking. There are talented singers among us whose gifts can make a significant contribution to the life of this church – we'd love to hear from you.

Finally, on *Sunday, February 18* members of the choir will be participating in "Rejoice! The Lord Is King" at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, a choral festival of worship sponsored by the Mark Thallendar Foundation and featuring noted guest conductor, Paul Salamonovich. More information to follow in next month's Spire.

—Debora Huffman  
Director of Music and Organist

## There is still time ....

So far we have received 95 pledges totaling \$190,961. This is 87% of our \$220,000 goal for 2007. We know there are some households that still have not gotten around to filling out a pledge card. We encourage pledging the year-round.

## Annual Reports Due

Annual Reports from Wardens, Guilds, Vestry Members, Staff, etc. are due to the office no later than January 8 to be included in the Annual Report. Thank you.

## New of Ascensionites

Parishioner **Howard Wagner** passed away on Tuesday, December 19. Services will be held at Ascension on Tuesday, January 2 at 4:00 p.m. with a reception to follow in the parish hall.

*Please plan to attend*

## *Ascension's Annual Meeting*

*Sunday, January 28*

*5:00 in the evening, in the parish hall*

*Potluck Dinner followed by the Annual Meeting*

*Sign up on the bulletin board beginning Sunday, January 7.*

*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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## Small Groups

The purpose of small groups is to foster Christian formation and spiritual fellowship through community, bible study, prayer, and mission. Do you ever wonder what that looks like? Here is what Michelle, a small group participant has to say.

*"I joined a small group a few years ago. In small groups I have found fun and fellowship, scholarship and sharing. Our parish is brimming with wonderful saints. They don't look or sound alike, or maybe even think alike, but they share an interest in walking a life that is closer to God. They have unique gifts, and I'm thrilled to be in their midst and have an opportunity to learn and share with them. Our feeblest, most half-hearted steps toward God are met by Him*

*with leaps and bounds. When we open the door to Him, He is right there, ready to be admitted as far as we let Him. Small groups have been helping me open the door wider, inviting God to be a resident in my life, not merely a neighbor that I ring up when I am in need."*

We have lots of small group opportunities, and we'd love to have you join us. Please see Diane Rhodus or Halcyon Koerber for more information.

—Halcyon Koerber

## New Transition Group

Has your life changed in any way— new job, new home, loss of a loved one, health changed, newly retired or any other change or loss? We have the group for you.

As part of the small group program at Ascension, we use the Bible to work through this process as well as to enrich our knowledge of the Bible. You don't need to know the Bible or even to have read it; you just need to come and see how this group can help you and how you can help other members.

We will begin our meeting on Thursday January 11 at 7 p.m. in the Parish Library. Please call Diane Rhodus or church office to reserve your chair. All are welcome, invite a friend.