



The SPIRE

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

JULY 2007

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

worship

Sundays (see back for 7/1)

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

Wednesdays

12pm Mass (except 7/4)
6pm Mass

Thursdays

7am Mass

Fridays

12pm Mass



upcoming events

- July 1—Mass on the Grass
10:15 am
- July 2—Group Leader's Mtg
- July 4—Independence Day
- July 14—Work Party
- July 15—Spire Deadline
- July 17—Vestry Mtg 6:30pm

† From the Sabbatical Priest-in-Charge

MOTHER JENNIFER D. BEAL

When this Spire arrives in your mailbox, the looming Sabbatical will have concluded. Already! How quickly eight weeks have gone. Welcome back, Father Michael!

Using the analogy of lenses on a camera, the Sabbatical's opportunity to try on a different lens has been instructive. We've looked at ourselves differently. We've experienced the importance of connecting to each other in community, the difference yet similarities of female clergy leadership, continued schedules of worship, meetings and projects, normal conclusions of our program year. Some observations are clearer and some fuzzier, some are nearer, some are further. All in all, just as Father Michael experienced restoration, so have we experienced the energy of change. Sabbaticals are very good things!

Take a moment to join me in thanking some of those members of this Body of Christ who have contributed to our life together. Thank you to our children and Catechists for contributing to our worship on June 10th. Thank you to Mike Beach and his faithful few who have saved us thousands of dollars

A Different Day

FROM FATHER ROGER WOOD

We were seventy passengers and sixty crew, representing fourteen nationalities. Our space was the 300 x 50 feet of the four masted "Star Clipper." Our location was that part of the Indian Ocean called the Arabian Sea—more precisely two days out of Goa, India, on our way into the Red Sea and on to Athens, Greece. Behind were the lands of Hinduism and the Buddha as we sailed toward the lands of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.

The calendar said it was April 8 and Easter Day. Question: How do you do Easter in that context? Answer: Differently!

You start by being thankful for a consensus that we ought to do something. Death and destruction with new life and beginnings are universal human experi-

by working at Church on their Saturday mornings. Thank you Scott Callihan, Greg Beach, and Jim Larew. Thank you to the Duffy family for your Annual Pentecost Brunch. Thank you to the Youth Group for flowers on Mother's Day. Thank you to Daniel Koeber for refinishing and painting the pew/bench on the landing outside the Parish Hall. Thank you to the choir who have now joined the congregation for the summer. Thank you to Maria Dodd for coordinating the United Thank Offering. Thank you to the Altar Guild for your usual stellar care for our sanctuary. Thank you to Adela Gomez for reading the Gospel in Spanish for our Pentecost celebration. Thank you to everyone who has filled in a need wherever you saw it. Together, we do thrive!

Be sure to find all the announcements of upcoming events throughout this newsletter.

Above all, as our summers unfold, remember to rest and restore your life with God (find the prayer For the Good Use of Leisure on page 825 in the Book of Common Prayer).

ences and it's part of our DNA to celebrate.

You find a Jew to select a reading from Hebrew Scripture, a Roman Catholic from the New Testament and a Muslim from the Koran. For prayers, you ask a Hindu and Eastern Orthodox and Anglican Christians. Music can be provided by singing groups: crew members from the Philippines, Indonesia, and India; an impromptu choir of English speaking passengers.

Where to do this Easter? Try midship in the mid-morning shared of the open deck "Tropical Bar."

It was a different Easter. But it worked for us on our voyage from Thailand to the Mediterranean. Surely the Holy Trinity was delighted. That is not to say the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter with the faith community at Ascension were not profoundly missed.

Next year, Easter at home will be better than ever. Alleluia!

Hey Ascension Youth!

It's not too late to sign up for SUMMER CAMP at Camp Stevens. Join Father Michael and others at International Odyssey Camp on August 5-11. Don't miss out on this great opportunity to tackle the challenge course, hike Volcan Mountain, and meet fellow campers from Japan. See Allison or Mary, or pick up a brochure in the Parish Hall, and sign up today!

OUTREACH IRIS is the acronym for Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Services. At the June Deanery Clergy (Clericus) meeting in Pico Rivera, The Rev'd Pam Tyler and Debbie Decker presented their program. Nearly one thousand religious refugees have received benefits from this Episcopal program located in Atwater Village at the Chapel of St. Francis. Beginning in September, they need men and women to volunteer a few hours a week to come and speak English with their clients who are learning about work and life in the United States. For more information, please call 323-667-2271, email DebbieDecker@LADiocese.org, or visit www.ladiocese.org.

Landscaping Project Update

FROM MIKE BEACH, VERGER

Since the last report many things have happened. We have more plants removed thanks to the help of a few gentlemen. Gem Plumbing installed a new sewer line to the street. A new sewer was needed because we had a number of places where tree roots had penetrated the pipe and two spots where the pipe was broken. If the broken pipe had collapsed, we would have had no sewer. It was also necessary to complete the installation before we landscaped the area. The photo below shows some of the roots in question.

There are five fewer trees on the property as well. Bob Alexander's tree service removed three palm trees, the liquid amber, and the walnut tree last

Saturday. This was an all day job and opened up the property immensely. Our hope is still to get someone to remove the large palm trees before we have to cut them down. That would be a shame to lose two thirty-foot trees to the saw. This is all part of the landscape plan.

Construction has started by removing concrete walks and the ramp near the playground. We managed to move the rose garden to the driveway at the parish house and may transplant them again before we are done. The other picture below shows a portion of the concrete that has been removed from the walkways.

Please be careful as you walk around the construction area, we do not want any accidents. Thanks.



Above: Day 2 Below: Sewer Project



Did You Know ?

◇ At our celebration of the Feast of the Ascension, we began to wonder two things. How did Ascension get its name? and What is the story about our banner?

When The Rev'd Dr. "Dean" Trew, who was Rector of the Church of Our Savior in San Gabriel, would trudge up the dirt path between orange trees in the 1880's, he felt like he was making an ascension up the mountain. That story stuck, and so it became the name of the gathering Episcopal community in Sierra Madre. Twenty years later, a former member of Ascension, Sierra Madre helped found a parish in the mountains of Tujunga. The name of 'Ascension' was suggested and it stuck. We are the only two parishes with this name in the entire 150 congregation Diocese of Los Angeles. I wonder if we are at the highest eleva-

tions?

Our banner came into being in preparation for our centennial celebration in 1985. Given by Gal and Larry Skyles in memory of Gail's mother, Elsie Higgins, a committee, chaired by Rex Levie the then-junior warden, assembled the possibilities of images to use on a banner for The Ascension. The image of Elijah's chariot which carried him up into heaven was chosen. Hence, our banner of cream, scarlet, and teal proudly displays a vehicle for Christ's magnificent return to heaven. Come and inspect this banner which sits to the left (north) of our altar.

◇ Sponsoring the Sanctuary candle is easy and inexpensive. Write your name and reason for sponsorship (i.e. in memory of or in thanksgiving for) next to your date on the schedule by the Parish Office door. Then,

write a check for \$12 made out to Church of the Ascension with "candle" and your sponsorship date on the memo line. Your name and the reason for sponsorship will appear in the Sunday bulletins of the date you selected.

◇ Sponsoring altar flowers is just as simple. Follow all of the directions above, only sign up on the flower schedule and make your check out to St. Anne's Altar Guild in the amount of \$35.

◇ Our Rectory, now the Parish House, was built in 1903. Is it any wonder it needs major updating and attention?! Canon Bamberger's office and the sacristy was added to the church building in 1913. The Parish Hall was added in 1922, no wonder there is no air conditioning!

Notes from the Loft

FROM DEBORA HUFFMAN, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC & ORGANIST

A tremendous thank-you to all who participated in the Centennial Concert! COMPOSERS OF 2007 was made possible by the fabulous musicians and incredible support personnel of Ascension – so singers, instrumentalists, coordinators, and facilitators – congratulations for a memorable event!

It has become a tradition of the Association of Anglican Musicians to hold their annual conference in England every ten years – on the sevens. So this 2007, immediately following Mass on the Grass, I head for the airport to cross the pond. The conference will be

held in Durham, where we'll be headquartered at Chad College and Durham Cathedral (do names like St. Cuthbert and the Venerable Bede come to mind?). Among other things, we'll celebrate Evensong in Durham Cathedral and York Cathedral, worship in Hexham Abbey, and Celtic Compline at St. Oswald's Church. The conference will end with a trip to Lindisfarne (Holy Island) and dinner in Alnwick. Following the conference my husband and I will enjoy a week in London. To say that I'm looking forward to this opportunity is an understatement.

During my absence from Ascension Natalie Ning will be the guest organist.

I look forward to sharing my UK experiences with you upon my return.

Small Groups

FROM HALCYON KOERBER

The purpose of small groups here at Ascension is to foster Christian fellowship and spiritual formation through community, bible study, prayer, and mission. What does this look like? Well, the following are some comments from people involved in small groups.

"Small groups become a habit. God gives so much back to you for spending a few hours with Him and your fellow travelers. Faith is a journey and you find very good company on the way."

"We have the opportunity to get to know people we didn't know and/or like before."

"We are able to share other peoples' lives, putting our own needs in better perspective."

"We have a greater connection with others-knowing them as individuals rather than in groups."

"It is very gratifying to pray for others and to know that they are praying for you, too."

Sound good? I encourage you to check out one of our small groups. Please talk with any small group leader or member or talk with Halcyon Koerber.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

FROM CAMERON COX

"Above all trust in the slow work of God."
—*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, SJ*

It's a wrap! Catechists Paul Anderson and Cameron Cox have completed Catechesis of the Good Shepherd training for levels I and II, respectively.

This represents a training commitment in excess of 150 hours covering pedagogy, child development and lesson planning.

Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. Fundamental to the program is the recognition that even the youngest child is capable of having his or her own relationship with God. But this formation is not exclusive to the child.

In fact, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd can be every bit as rewarding for the catechist. For more information about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, for your child or for you, please contact Paul Anderson or Cameron Cox.

Classes will resume again in September -- the first Sunday following Ministry Fair -- with new materials and presentations for Level I and II. Presentations include the True Vine Meditations, Psalm 23, the Holy Eucharist, the Mystery of

Faith, the Sower and the Seed, the Good Samaritan, the Found Coin, the Wedding Feast...and many more.

St. Mary's Guild

FROM LISA REED, PRESIDENT

On Saturday, June 9, 2007 the members of St. Mary's Guild met for their annual end of the year luncheon, hosted by Jill Wagner. Thank you Jill for opening your home to all of us. We had a great time and we all enjoyed the "silly white elephant" gift exchange.

Thank you to Ann Poland for her leadership as our President this past year, we appreciate your hard work and continuous support of St. Mary's Guild. Ann had suggested that I be elected to become the new President and it was unanimously agreed.

If you enjoy organizing church functions such as the reception following Evensong or the Easter Brunch I encourage you to be a part of St. Mary's. Our next potluck luncheon is Saturday, September 8, 2007 in the Parish Hall at 11:30 am. I'm sure that many of you have seen the greeting cards of our beautiful Church—if you are interesting in purchasing these cards for your own use or to give as gifts, please see anyone of us and we will be happy to show you the many different pictures. Proceeds from these cards help us to sponsor a child in need to attend summer camp. Our own Susannah Wagner-Tomlin created the photos and design of these cards.

News of Ascensionites

Congratulations to more graduates! **Ashley Johnson** (Granddaughter of Carolyn and Esler Johnson) is graduating from High School and will be attending Citrus College.

Katie Barber (Granddaughter of Charity and Hal Barber) will enter the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs following in the footsteps of her parents, grandfather,

and great grandfather.

Liz Delgado just completed doing the Daughters of the King website for the Pittsburgh area.

We mourn the loss of **Sherry Teets** and **Connie Woods**. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Cards for Sherry Teets can be sent to 37 Mary Lane, Cumberland Foreside, Maine 04110.

In Church on June 10, we gave thanks for the birth of **Peter Robert Callihan**. His brother Philip and parents Elizabeth and Scott were warmly greeted by the congregation.

Olivia Lopez was born on June 7, 2007 to proud parents Oscar and Monica Lopez, big sister Sofia, and grandparents Fernando and Adela Gomez. She weighed 7 lb. 4 oz 21 inches.

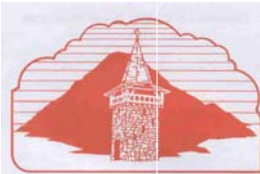
*In celebration of
Independence Day:*

**Mass on the Grass
Sunday, July 1st
Sierra Vista Park
Eucharist begins at
10:15 with barbecue to
follow.**

*Bring your own cooler, drinks,
chairs, and side dishes to share.
Note: 8 am mass will be at the
church with no coffee hour.*

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**

From the Senior Warden JIM LAREW

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:17

As the heat arrives and the Gooden school children depart for a well-deserved summer break, "Building on the Vision" has emerged as a reality. Committed groups of Men's Breakfast participants forewent meals and ripped out, well, almost everything. Plumbers, tree trimmers, and other contractors have descended upon the campus digging trenches, laying pipe and ripping out concrete. We even had a small contingent of people trying to save and find a home for our palm trees. The stewardship of our small, but mighty church continues.

This is truly exciting, but carries a fair amount of pressure. Perhaps this will be a column of asking for prayer. Pray for the safety of the workers, pray for wisdom in decision making, pray that we meet our fundraising goals, and pray for successful completion of the project. I would encourage each and everyone to peruse the plans in the Parish Hall and pray. This is your project.

I'd like to thank our dedicated Vestry Women and Men for their guidance and oversight of our Capital Project. In addition to meeting every month, your Vestry met in special session so timely decisions about the project could be made. Bids for the first phase of the project came in 50-54% over the landscape architects' estimates and important go/no go and schedule changes were made to accommodate. The Vestry has centered their decisions on quality. Although the focus is largely on the case statement for function and safety, the Vestry mantra could be summed up as, "If we're going to do something, let's do it right." This is not a Vestry interested in cutting corners.

I know it may seem repetitive, but I cannot thank our verger, Mike Beach, enough for volunteering to be our project manager. Mike is on-site every day overseeing the project and is adept and creative at problem solving all the expected and unexpected that pop up. I'd also like to thank Scott Callihan, our Buildings & Grounds Chair and Lavette Teague, our Treasurer. Jim Norman has also contributed his expertise. When you see these fine men, I hope you'll express your appreciation

for their time and hard work to make our church a safer, more accessible, and more sacred place to worship.

Father Michael returns from his sabbatical this month and kudos go to Mother Jennifer for continuing to enrich our worship and pastoral care life. She has come alongside us in our time of need with love and no matter how stressful things become she always has a smile on her face. And Hanna, our fearless administrator, has really stepped up to the plate, and I so appreciate her hard work and initiative. If you get a chance, thank Mother Jennifer at church and thank Hanna by e-mail at parish@ascension-sierramadre.com.

Finally, welcome home Father Michael and apologies that his sabbatical has been dotted with the interruption of some important decisions and signing of contracts. I sincerely hope we will one day be able to give Father a true sabbatical of longer duration.

I thank all who have contributed to the best of their ability thus far to the Capital Funds Drive. Your generosity is a legacy for generations to come.

Youth of the Ascension: Check out www.tobymac.com