

## ST. MARY'S GUILD

Please join us for our next potluck luncheon meeting on Saturday, March 8, 2008 at 11:30 am. Our special guest, Dr. Debora Huffman, will be sharing photos and experiences from her trip to England.

Lisa Reed  
- President



## SMALL GROUPS

The purpose of small groups is to foster Christian formation and spiritual fellowship through community, bible study, prayer, and mission."

Outreach is part of the small group mission. This happens in two ways. From time-to-time, each small group as a whole has taken on a project outside the regular meeting time. Projects have included such things as helping provide supplies for the start up of catechesis, refurbishing and shipping computers to a school in Central America, and sponsoring a Bad Weather Shelter dinner. Our Outreach also includes inviting new people to join us on a journey of spiritual formation in community. We invite parishioners as well as those without a church family to join us. All are welcome. Come check out a small group and see how much fun we have.

*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

From Ted Calleton

Recently, Kathy and I attended a Boy Scout breakfast – an annual benefit that raises funds to provide Scouting programs to those needing its message but who are unable to afford its costs. The keynote speaker, Nikki Stone, an Olympic Gold Medalist in Inverted Aerial Skiing (think gymnastics on a ski-jump), gave an inspiring talk on overcoming physical and mental adversity. In her case, repeated hard landings had so compressed her spinal column that she was told she could never ski again. Her efforts to regain her strength and skills and overcome her fears were daunting, and she reduced her philosophy to a simple message that she called "the Turtle Effect."

The Turtle Effect has three parts. In order to be successful, you must be soft on the inside, have a hard shell, and be willing to stick your neck out. It sounded to me like a description of a Christian.

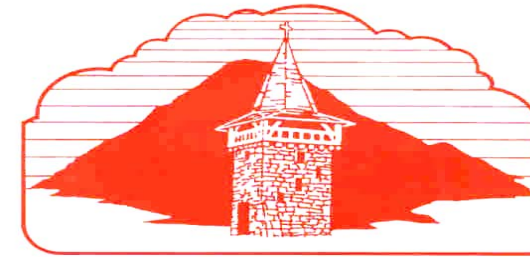
For we Christians, too:

- must be soft on the inside (filled with compassion and love)
- have a hard shell (be able to withstand the taunts, temptations and tribulations of the media, modern "culture," and the barbs of the business world), and
- stick out our necks (be able to stand up and commit to Christ and his church).

Isn't this what Father Michael asks us to do every Sunday: be compassionate and loving; be firm in our commitment to Christ and to our church; and reach out to others?

We don't have to be Olympic athletes seeking gold medals to adopt the Turtle Effect. As Christians the opportunity confronts us every day. Not in spectacular or heroic ways, but in the day-to-day opportunities for stewardship in our lives – the incremental effect that our words, gifts, and actions can have on others.

## Hurrah, for the Turtles!



The SPIRE

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

MARCH 2008

## Worship

### Sundays

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

### Wednesday

6pm Mass  
7:30pm Choir Rehearsal  
Wednesdays in Lent  
4:30pm Prayer Walk

6:00 Eucharist  
6:30 Lenten Supper  
7:00 Lenten Series

### Thursdays

7am Mass

### Fridays

12pm Mass

## From the Rector

When we think of Outreach, there are many facets to consider. One facet is what we do as a congregation in terms of Outreach. We give money, we provide space for other's ministries, and we offer hands-on efforts. Another facet is what we do as individuals. We offer our money and our time and talents in the service of others.

In the long run, Outreach is about how we attempt to meet the needs of others from the abundance with which God has blessed us. Using the efforts of those who came before us, God has blessed us as a congregation with buildings which we are called to use for the benefit of others. It is in response to this call to Outreach that we host 12 Step meetings many nights of the week, that we make space available to the Gooden School, and that we open our doors to a variety of community groups which in turn serve others. When, as a community, we recognize that God has given us plenty to eat, we, in turn, must consider those who have so little. In response, we give money, and we collect food for Friends in Deed and the mission. As a community, our Outreach shows through our stewardship of space, money, and talents

I am constantly amazed when I consider all of the ways that people in our congregation serve the needs of others. We have parishioners who volunteer their time and talents in hospitals, civic government, food banks, libraries, homeless shelters, public schools, youth organizations, service clubs, and, as you know, a volunteer fire department.

As we try to increase our efforts at Outreach here at Ascension, I believe that there are two challenges that are inter-related. The first is that we need to create a "culture of Outreach." Serving the needs of others has to become part of our very being. The second challenge is to

grow into the awareness of just how much God has blessed us so that generosity becomes one of our defining characteristics. Outreach is easy when you know how much you have been blessed and how sharing is a source of joy for ourselves, for those with whom we share, and for God.

MAB +



**DON'T FORGET** —Daylight Savings Time begins on March 9th!

## Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

On Sunday February 10th, the kids in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd took a little time to send love to their families. Attending children made a Valentine's necklace for their moms; and since fathers are often forgotten on this day, a treasure box for their dads. The children enjoyed taking time to get "a little crafty" as Mr. Cox put it (or was it Mr. Anderson), and so did their teachers!

Catechesis continues to be sparsely populated, however, so we would like to take a few minutes to encourage you to bring your children to Sunday School. The discussion and learning gets richer and richer with more and more kids in the room.

If you would like to stay in the class with your child, you are extremely welcome - the more the merrier - and the kids really enjoy sharing their learning with the people who are most important in their lives.

An exciting upcoming lesson is being planned during which Father Michael will come to visit and tell us all about the vestments that our priests wear.

## Holy Week and Easter Services

*Palm Sunday—March 16—8:00 & 10:15 am*

*Monday and Tuesday in Holy Week—*

*March 17 & 18—7:00 pm Mass*

*Tenebrae—March 19—7:00 pm*

*Maundy Thursday—March 20—7:00 pm*

*Good Friday—March 21—Stations of the Cross at noon*

*Good Friday Liturgy—7:00 pm*

*Easter—March 23—6:00 & 10:15 am*

## OUTREACH – Ways We Can Make a Difference

How often have we seen a homeless person and wanted to do something! But how should we help? All the charitable agencies tell us that we should not give homeless people money because what we want the money to do is not always how the money is spent. The Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Churches (ECPAC) and its programs can help us assist the homeless in the right way.

Here at Ascension we've supported the Bad Weather Shelter. But the Shelter is not the only ECPAC program we can help. Friends Indeed House is a food distribution center where the homeless and the poor can come for food on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Much of this food comes from the Los Angeles Food Bank which services many food distribution locations in Los Angeles County. Perhaps you read a recent article in the Los Angeles Times about the decrease in the amount of food available for distribution at places like Friends Indeed House. More and more often, this facility is having to rely on private sources, people like us, to make up the difference. Friends Indeed House services approximately 200 people a week. Their doors open at 10:00, but people start lining up as early as 8:30.

On Mondays and Thursdays, Friends Indeed House sponsors The Women's Room, a place where homeless women find refuge from the streets, clean up, have a cup of coffee and socialize in a safe environment. Members of the staff let these women know what resources are available to help them improve their current situations. On a recent visit to Friends Indeed House, Halcyon Koerber and I visited this room. It is a very welcoming place. Lots of little touches show that ECPAC believes that the women who come deserve a place that is attractive and homey. Every day the Women's Room is open, there are special events designed to appeal to women – on Valentine's Day, for example, the ladies decorated Valentine cookies and could make Valentine cards. One woman who comes to the Women's Room said, "It's nice to come here because they're dealing with us as women – not homeless women, but people who have a need." Future plans for the

Women's Room include installing a shower and getting a washer/dryer. The Women's Room Coordinator is looking for volunteers who will provide a hot meal – something simple such as soup. Maybe we could help here.

### WANT TO HELP?

- Donate non-perishable goods to Friends Indeed's food distribution program:
  - (Peanut butter, canned meats, cereals and protein based foods are always needed. For the homeless, pull top cans work best.)
- Donate fruit and vegetables from your trees/gardens – Have too many oranges, tangerines, avocados? Plant too much zucchini? There is always a need.
- Make a financial contribution
- Designate ECPAC for your United Way Contribution
- Ask your employer to match your gift if applicable
- Volunteer
  - At the food bank
  - At the Women's Room
  - At the Bad Weather Shelter

Jean Rowe

### According to Carol George

Volunteering at Friends Indeed is a wonderful experience. There is a sense of camaraderie between the volunteers themselves and the staff. Everyone is friendly and helpful.

I have been there every Wednesday morning for over a year. We are made to feel valued and appreciated. I look forward to Wednesdays.

## Youth Group Happenings

February was a month full of Outreach to those in need.

*THANK YOU* to everyone who helped with the events or financially sponsored the Youth Group's 30-Hour Famine and their participation in the Bad Weather Shelter. The youth spent 30 devoted hours learning about hunger while committing to a fast. Many expressed that they felt empowered to do something to help people who are hurting and hungry in our community and world.

**COMING UP IN MARCH:** Easter Egg Decorating!

Saturday, March 22 10am-Noon Come and continue the

Youth Group's tradition of preparing for the children's Easter Egg Hunt.

**NIGHT OF CHAMPIONS** Saturday, March 29 , 3:30pm-8:30pm (Cost is \$12)

The Night of Champions is a gathering of Christian teenagers at Azusa Pacific University. We will listen to Christian bands play and hear athletes talk about their lives as Christians. The admission fee includes In-N-Out Burger, a T-Shirt, and transportation to and from the event.



## NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Sincere thanks to Michelle Beauchesne for her superb rendition of Bach's "Arioso" and cello obligato for Faure's "Cantique de Jean Racine" on February 17.

The month of March will begin with oboist Sean Dougall joining the choir in the presentation of James Hopkins' "Thy Name Is Love" and John Rutter's "The Lord Is My Shepherd." Speaking of John Rutter, Susan Beach and I recently had the privilege of singing under the composer at this year's Thallander Foundation Choral Festival at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels – along with about 1,000 other singers! Included in the repertoire of the event were Rutter's "The Lord Is My Shepherd" and his "The Lord Bless You and Keep You," which the Ascension choir sang on February 24. The Ascension version of these works is, as you would expect, significantly more intimate than the glorious sound of the mass chorus, each version uniquely valid. Singing Rutter under Rutter was definitely the highlight of the festival for us, and I'm confident that having experienced the composer conducting his work will bring a new perspective to our own performance of this literature in the future.

The fifth Sunday of Lent, March 9, will feature Gilbert Martin's powerful arrangement of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" and Tchaikovsky's "The Crown of

Roses (Legend)." The latter, published in Moscow in 1883 and allegorical in nature, describes the Christ child as having a garden, roses from which a group of children made a crown of thorns which then was pressed onto Jesus' forehead. And the rest is history.

On Palm/Passion Sunday the choir will sing Craig Courtney's exquisite "Behold, the Lamb of God" and Hal Hopson's arrangement of Billings' "When Jesus Wept." As usual, the choir will participate in the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services.

Finally, on March 23 we'll celebrate the resurrection of our Lord with festive hymns, anthems, and organ music. Featured anthems of the day will be "On Earth Has Dawned This Day of Days" arranged by Robert Benson and Roland Martin's setting of the wonderful George Herbert text, "Love Bade Me Welcome."

So journey with us through the remainder of Lent into Holy Week and Easter and allow the richness of the music to intensify your celebration of these spiritual wonders.

Debora Huffman

Director of Music and Organist



## ECPAC Director To Visit Ascension

On March 2 our guest preacher will be The Reverend Patricia O'Reilly. An Episcopal priest, Rev. O'Reilly began her ministry at the Church of Epiphany in Lincoln Heights, Father Wood's former parish. Since that time she has actively participated in a number of social service agencies ministering to the poor, the homeless, and the mentally ill. In 2006, she was selected Executive Director of the Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Area Churches. As one of the 44 churches that make up ECPAC, we welcome Rev. Pat and the message she brings to us.

## ACTIVE MILITARY PICTURE GALLERY

Every week during Prayers of the People, we pray for our service men and women by name. Over the weeks we have learned their names, but few of us know their faces.

We want to know them better. If you have put a name on our "currently serving in the military list," bring us a photograph for our bulletin board. To make sure we have the correct name, rank, branch of service, and posting location, please attach this information to the picture.

## DID YOU KNOW?

*Many of your fellow parishioners participate in Outreach activities other than the ones we currently support as a parish.*

Please take time to talk with your friends here and find out how they are taking some of their time, talent, or treasure to spread their abundance around the world.

There may be opportunities for many of us that we simply do not know about. Just drop a note in my box at church, and perhaps we will have more volunteers for these wonderful ministries.

We also have a few parishioners who no longer drive after dark. Anyone interested in developing this ministry?

Gratefully, Diane Rhodus Ministry Co-ordinator

## EASTER FLOWERS

Easter is on March 23 this year, somewhat earlier than we are used to. Easter flower donations in any amount may be given as memorials of or in thanksgiving for loved ones and special occasions in your life. Flower envelopes will be included in the service bulletins for February 24, continuing each Sunday thereafter through March 16. They will also be available at the back of the church or from the church office during the week. Contributions must be received in the church office by Tuesday, March 18 to be listed in the Easter bulletins. Please make checks payable to St. Anne's Altar Guild.