

WORSHIP Fellowship Formation Outreach Pastoral Care Presence

It has been over fifty years since a new complete set of festival red vestments has been bought for the Church of the Ascension. St. Anne's Altar Guild invites you to join them in offering these specially commissioned vestments for the worship of God. These new vestments will be first used to celebrate Pentecost on May 11th, 2008 in thanksgiving for one hundred twenty years of worship in our historic building. More information is available in the Parish Hall as well as from the Rector – Canon Bamberger, or the Director of the Altar Guild – Kathy Calleton.

In support of this offering of new festival red vestments, I/we wish to give \$ _____.

This gift is in: Memory of: _____ Thanksgiving for: _____

Signed _____ (Name printed) _____

Please make checks out to St. Ann's Altar Guild. Checks or this pledge form can be placed in the offering basin on Sunday or returned to the Parish Office.
detach along line

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



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Senior Warden's Blog

From Ted Calleton

The focus of this month's Spire is "Presence." We define Presence as *being present* in the larger church, in our community, and in the lives of our loved ones and neighbors. In other words, the way we act in this world defines us, our parish, and the larger church.

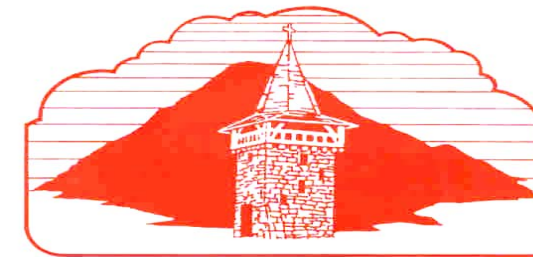
As a village church, we seek to reflect the loving presence of God in Sierra Madre. We do this through the maintenance, enhancement, and use of our historic buildings and grounds and through the welcome we extend to those seeking a place of rest and renewal. We offer the Memorial Garden, available to all, as a consecrated space for the interment of ashes. We have piano recitals, voting, receptions, wedding rehearsal dinners, Brownie award ceremonies and other community events in the Parish Hall. Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12

step groups meet in our Parish House most nights of the week. We offer parishioners (and anyone else with a green thumb!) the opportunity to share in keeping our grounds beautiful and our plant repaired by holding volunteer work days. Parishioners reflect our presence by being involved in many civic and cultural activities ranging from the City Council to the Friends of the Library, from our local schools to scouting groups to name just a few of these activities.

As part of the larger church, we seek to reflect the loving presence of God in the greater community. Beyond the confines of Sierra Madre, we assist those at the Mission, Friends in Need House, and other area groups, including preparing dinners for the homeless at the Bad Weather Shelter. Two of the diocesan and national church activities that immediately come to mind are the opportunities to help rebuild Camp Stevens with our time, talent, and treasure and to continue the building and maintenance of the National Cathedral www.cathedral.org.

The foregoing activities repre-

sent some of the many facets of Stewardship at Ascension; each reflects the care and nurturing of those gifts which God has entrusted to us. These activities also demonstrate the many ways in which our parishioners are responding to the call to say "Yes" to the Christian life. I am gratified by the signs of commitment to God's work in both the religious and secular world that are demonstrated by the members of our parish. But there is always more to do, and it is through your time, talent, and treasure that we will do it. If we are to get to saying "Yes!" with our lives as Father Michael urges us, we must identify the opportunities, assess our talents, and commit ourselves to service. Please join me in doing so.



The SPIRE

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

MAY 2008

Worship

Sundays

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

Wednesday

4:30pm Prayer Walk
6:00pm Mass
7:30pm Choir Rehearsal

Thursdays

7am Mass

Fridays

12pm Mass

From the Rector

One of the blessings in my life for which I give thanks has been the opportunity to serve as your priest over a significant time in this parish. (Quietly, last month I observed that I am the longest tenured rector in the 123 year history of our parish - I must have been a teenager when I arrived here in 1985!) One of the privileges that comes with serving for this length of time is being a witness to some of the many generations of families for whom Ascension is home. I share with you a picture I took of Violet Anne Beach a few hours after she was born. While I buried her great-grandmother and grandmother and officiated at her aunt's wedding and baptized her sister, I have actually served FIVE generations for some of our families.

in this place, we are living out Jesus' promise to be with His disciples always. May Violet and all our children grow up knowing that they always have a place where they belong.

Yours in Christ,

MAB +



Upcoming Events

5/2-5/3 Youth camping trip

5/4 Ascension Sunday

5/11 Pentecost – dedication of new red festival vestments
Mother's Day, celebration of Ascension's 120th anniversary

5/20 Vestry Meeting

5/31 Parish Ministry Council Restructuring Retreat

6/1 5:00 Choir Evensong - / pot luck

6/7 Allison Rainey's Ordination

6/8 Allison's last Sunday with us

One critical aspect of the Ministry of Presence is the continuity that the Church, and particularly the Church of the Ascension can play in people's lives. Ascension is so much more than personalities. It fulfills the expectation that folks have that this church is a foreshadowing of the eternal home that we are promised in the Resurrection.

This is an earthly place where God's people are connected through the generations. In this modern time, we tend to move much more frequently than our grandparents did. We change jobs, we buy different houses, and we generally have a shallower root system than in previous times. But people are deeply attracted to a community and place like Ascension because we are rooted. And even if some of the generations are living at a distance, they know they are still connected here.

Our Ministry of Presence is a sacramental image of God's presence. Ascension is here, and we aren't going anywhere else until the end of the ages. As the Body of Christ

ANOTHER SECURITY PROCEDURE

Some of you may have noticed that the church office door is no longer open on Sunday mornings. In addition to rekeying our premises, your Vestry has asked that the door to the parish office remain locked whenever the staff is not present. A mail slot in the door is available for your convenience.



THE BIG YELLOW BUS

Have you signed the reservation list to reserve a ride on the big yellow bus to St. John's Cathedral to witness Allison Rainey's ordination on June 7th? There will be a lot of traffic at the Cathedral, so avoid the stress and share the joyous occasion as you ride with your Ascension friends.

(The reservation list is on the bulletin board in the parish hall.)

What do we mean by *PRESENCE?* – Some thoughts from your Ordinand

From the moment I first drove off the 210 Freeway and up Laurel Avenue during Lent 2006, it has been apparent to me that Church of the Ascension has a striking presence, both in the physical property and grounds and in the people who compose this church. When considering our mission of Presence, I imagine most of us think of how we exist in Sierra Madre. We envision how the greater community perceives us and how we impact the greater community. We think of how our Presence serves as a way to remind and teach about the past, how our Presence impacts the future, and how the Presence of Church of the Ascension provides continuity between the two. We consider how Christ's Presence impacts us week to week as we draw together as a Christian family at the Table.

As the days of my presence as Ministry Intern at Church of the Ascension rapidly draw to a close, I have been challenged with an additional conception of what we mean when we promote our mission of Presence. Many, or most of us, live the moments of our lives either in the past or in the future. I have to admit I have been doing a lot of reflecting upon the past three years of seminary and my experiences serving all of you. Additionally, I have been anxiously anticipating the coming months – graduation, ordination, a new job and home, marriage, and, God-willing, another ordination. We humans are good at longing for, regretting, or getting stuck in the past. We are also good at dwelling in expectations, worries, and hopes for the future. I think one of the most meaningful gifts and greatest challenges of our mission of Presence lies in simply being present.

As I spend my final days serving at Ascension, I invite you to join me in being mindfully, joyfully present. Hear the laughter in the Parish Hall. Both offer and savor our rich sense of hospitality. Taste and take in the consecrated bread and wine. Feel your hands as they cross your head and heart to receive God's blessing. Look into the eyes of your neighbor and know that there will never be another time filled with the same opportunities as today. Yet, remain faithful that Christ remains the same yesterday, today, tomorrow, and always.

Let's together face and embrace the pains, joys, fullness, emptiness, challenges, and gifts God has given us all right now. I invite all of us to be especially intentional as we continue to live out our mission of Presence.

Faithfully,

Allison Rainey

Ministry Intern

DID YOU KNOW?

We have CD's of Canon Wood's historical presentation on March 12, 2007 available for you to check out. If you missed this wonderful talk, you missed some mighty interesting information about his family, his personal story, and the beginning years of Sierra Madre. Without this special family, Ascension wouldn't be at this glorious location and would not have had such an important historical presence in this village.

The Sunday breakfast table has been discontinued due to budget constraints

Being here for others is part of our presence in this community and a very large part of our commitment to Christ and each other. We have indeed begun to share our gasoline and time with each other; there are at least 4 parishioners who have joined the "bring a non-driver to church" community. Please consider being part of this ministry by calling Diane Rhodus or the church office for further information.



News of Ascensionites

Elizabeth Hastings, baptized 4/6/08, daughter of Glen & Janel Hastings. **Olivia Lopez**, baptized 4/6/08, daughter of Oscar & Monica Lopez. **Violet Anne Beach**, born 4/14/08, 8lbs. 1 oz., 20", proud parents Greg & Holly Beach.

On 4/27/08 **Mason Ross Matsuo**, son of Kenji & Monica Matsuo, was baptized. During that service Bishop Carrenza confirmed Elizabeth & Scott Callihan, James Jesser and Garry Pinney.

HEY ASCENSION YOUTH

Make sure to be at church by **8:45am on Sunday, May 11th**. We are going to practice the church's mission of Presence by following God's commandment to honor our mothers and other special women in our church.

We want you to know how important your presence is both at Youth Group and in worship. Your youthful energy, friendship through Youth Group, active participation in worship either in the pews, as acolytes, and/or in the choir offer a Presence that helps others better know Christ. Your presence **IS** the future of the church!

Your Youth Group Leaders,
Allison Rainey & Mary Baffes

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

This May brings us the celebration of Ascension, followed by Pentecost and Trinity Sunday. Choral music for the month, ranging in mood from the glorious to the contemplative, includes:

May 4 - the Sunday after Ascension

God Has Gone Up With a Shout - Hal Hopson

Go Forth Into the World in Peace - Paul Sjolund

May 11 – Pentecost

Built on the Rock - Hal Hopson

Behold the Tabernacle of God - William H. Harris

May 18 – Trinity Sunday

O Love, How Deep - Everett Titcomb

Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether - Harold Friedell

May 25 – Pentecost 2

How Good to Thank our God – John Ferguson, text by Brian Wren

Peace I leave With You – Walter Pelz

As I mentioned in last month's Spire, a Choral Evensong will be held on Sunday, June 1, at 5:00 p.m. The service will feature music by Thomas Tallis (1505-1585) and William Smith (1603-1645). Following the service the congregation is invited to an all-church potluck supper in the Parish Hall. Please join us for an evening of meditation, music, and fellowship.

Debora Huffman

Director of Music and Organist



St. Mary's Guild

Please join us for our year-end potluck meeting, to be held at the home of Jill Wagner on Saturday, June 14, 2008. Don't forget your silly White Elephant exchange gift and be prepared for fun, food and fellowship. For directions, call either Jill or me. Our phone numbers are in the directory.

Lisa Reed

-President



The Presence of the Ascension Congregation since 1885

Ascension has always been prominent in Sierra Madre as the village church. In this capacity, it serves as a meeting place for nine different 12-step programs each week, a meeting place for civic clubs, scouting awards banquets, and many other functions. Ascension also has a national presence. The National Association for the Mentally Ill meets in our facility, and we are in the National Registry of Historical Places. Ascension also provides a polling place for local, state, and national elections. Many private organizations also use our facilities: Gooden School, music student recitals, and private parties for retirement, etc.

Ascension also has a presence as a congregation in local and national activities. We have members on the City Council and in the fire department. We are represented in many professions, such as teachers, engineers, doctors, and nurses. We put in many volunteer hours in the community providing service to the aged, youth, local missions, the needy, prison ministries, civic clubs, library work, and scouting functions. Several organizations in the parish support international outreach missions as well.



Probably the most visible to the community is our newly landscaped side yard with lights in the trees and on the pilasters providing a quiet and safe spot for people in the community to relax and think. We have also provided a comfortable place to collect one's thoughts in the Memorial Garden.

When you stop and think about Ascension and Sierra Madre, you conclude that there is a special relationship. No other private institution in the city provides such a beautiful, safe, lighted, and quiet space for the community.