



The SPIRE

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

November 2006

Our Core Ministries

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

St. Mary's Guild

St. Mary's Guild will be having a potluck luncheon and business meeting on Saturday, November 4 at 11:30 a.m. in the Parish Hall. All women of the church are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Inside this issue:

Vestry Nominations	2
Transition Group	2
Did You Know?	2
UTO	2
From the Loft	3
Calendar	3
News of Ascensionites	4
Sr. Warden Notes	4

✝ From the Rector

Every year it happens without fail. About the time our Stewardship campaign wraps up, I come upon new ideas from other congregations that make me end up wishing, "if only I had written that." This year's example comes from St. Paul's Church in Ventura where my friend Jerry Kahler is the rector. Jerry put together the neatest brochure; in it he describes the four types of giving. They are

- Annual Giving – when we make a commitment each year to the on-going life and ministry of the congregation
- Mission Giving – when we contribute to the specific ministries and outreach efforts of the Church, e.g. UTO, ERD, Friends In Deed
- Capital Fund Giving – when we give to support a specific project – usually of a bricks and mortar nature, e.g. our "Building on the Vision" project about which you will be hearing much more in the coming months
- Legacy Giving – when we make provision in our estate planning, e.g. including the parish in a will or trust, designating the parish as life insurance benefici-

ary, or setting up an annuity for the church

At Ascension, we have the opportunity to participate in all of these forms of giving. In 2007, we are planning a Capital Funds Campaign to address some long needed improvements for the present and future needs of our parish. There are three major elements:

- Improvements of the grounds for landscape, hardscape, handicapped access, and campus integration
- Renovation of the Parish House (the former Rectory at 45 E. Laurel)
- Renovation of the Parish Hall (with modern bathrooms!!! and more air-conditioning!!!!)

Finally, I want to thank everyone for all of the ways that you contribute to our life and work together. As we live into our calling to be good stewards of that which God has blessed us, let us continue to express our gratitude for all that has been given to us.

—Canon Michael Bamberger

Calling All Pledge Cards

Do you keep forgetting to bring your pledge card on Sunday? We now have an alternative way to pledge that you might like to use: fill out your pledge card on line. What ever way you choose to get the card to us—in the plate, by mail or on line— please complete your pledge card now.

So far this year we have received only 46 pledges compared to the 113 we received last year. That means that only 41% of previous pledgers have made their pledge this year. We are also hoping to receive pledges from those who did not pledge last year. Our Vestry needs to hear from you so that we can complete our budget for 2007.

Vestry Nominations Now

Now is the time to nominate next year's Vestry candidates. By definition, the Vestry is the body within a congregation that, with the clergy, leads the parish. According to diocesan guidelines, to qualify, a nominee must be 16 years of age or over, be a confirmed communicant in good standing in the Episcopal Church, regularly attend church services at Ascension, and be a pledging contributor to the support of the parish. A member of the Vestry shall not be a member of another church.

Each year we elect three nominated members at our Annual Meeting in January. Vestry members are elected for three year terms.

The Vestry meets once a month throughout the year. Additional meetings are called as needed. A Vestry member must be willing to accept the responsibility of regular attendance at all meetings and be willing to serve on committees which are established by the Vestry. Names of nominees should be submitted to any Vestry member by December 1.

New Transition Group

Has your life changed in any way? Are you experiencing a new job, a new home, the loss of a loved one, a health change, retirement or any other change or loss?

We have a group designed just for you. As part of the Small Group program at Ascension, we use the Bible to work through the transition 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 before. You just need to come and see how this process can help you and how you can help other members.

We will begin our group Thursday November 9th at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall Library. Please call Diane Rhodus at church to reserve your chair. All are welcome; invite a friend.

Did you Know?

Did You Know—

—The pink sheets we fill out for prayers the last Sunday of each month are used to determine what goes on the daily prayer list. This list is printed on blue paper and is placed in the Parish Hall on the wall across from the secretary's office, as well as at the back of the church. Please feel free to take one. Make our prayer list a part of your daily prayer life.

—Ascension is updating its computer files and would like every family to complete and turn in a Confidential Member Information Form to the office as soon as possible. Forms are available on the counter of the Reception Office and at the back of the church.

—The new pictorial directories will be printed in November.

United Thank Offering

The United Thank Offering Ingathering will take place on Sunday, November 12, 2006.

For those unfamiliar with the program, the United Thank Offering was founded in 1889 as a ministry of the Episcopal Church. Its purpose is to provide a way for men, women, and children to give thanks to God for the blessings in our everyday lives and to affirm that thanks through a contribution. The money gathered in each parish throughout the United States accumulates into a large sum that is sent two times a year for mission and ministry around the world.

For those wishing to participate in this ministry, blue boxes for collecting coins and envelopes for making donations are available at the back of the church.

—Maria Dodd

November 2006

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	2 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	3 Noon Mass	4 9:00 am Altar Guild 11:30 am St. Mary's Luncheon
5 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	6 6:00 pm Small Group Leaders	7 Election Day Polling Place	8 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	9 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum 11:00 am Staff mtg	10 Noon Mass	11 8:00 Men's Breakfast 9:00 am Altar Guild
12 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	13 Office Closed Veteran's Day	14 6:30 pm Vestry	15 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	16 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	17 Noon Mass	18 9:00 am Altar Guild
19 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass Noon PMC	20	21	22 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	23 9:00 am Mass Thanksgiving Office Closed	24 Noon Mass Office Closed	25 9:00 am Altar Guild
26 8:00 am Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 am Mass	27 6:00 Capital Campaign Mtg	28	29 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	30 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum 11:00 am Staff mtg		

Dates of Interest

- November 4—11:30 am St. Mary's Guild Luncheon
- November 6—Small Group Leaders Meeting at 6:00 pm
- November 7—Election Day
- November 11—Men's Breakfast 8:00 am
- November 13—Office Closed, Veteran's Day observed
- November 14—Vestry Meeting at 6:30 pm
- November 15—Spire Deadline
- November 19—Parish Ministry Council Meeting at Noon
- November 23—Thanksgiving Mass at 9:00 am
- November 27—Capital Fund Drive Meeting at 6:00 in the library.

Notes from the Loft

During the past month or so, I have felt as if I were a living chapter of *Groundhog Day* – on Saturday I'd spend my usual afternoon in the sanctuary practicing for the next day, on Sunday I'd play the final hymn and closing voluntary for the 8:00 service, at 9:10 the choir would rehearse, and just before the 10:15 service, the organ would start to groan and smoke. In response, the choir would proceed downstairs to the chapel and service music would emanate from the piano. Within the next day or so, the organ technician would evaluate the situation, perform some mode of remediation, and declare it well—only to have it all happen again the next Sunday!

It's been intentional to place the piano in the sanctuary for designated purposes – but it was never meant to carry the entire service on its own! We were indeed fortunate that it was in place to serve as the organ's

surrogate as necessary.

Finally, the technician installed a new (used) blower, a bigger and better rendition of the ailing one, which seems to have solved the problem. Hopefully, after this intervention, our king of instruments will enjoy a long and healthy existence – and I can stop dreaming about Paxatawny Phil!

We begin November with All Saints' Day and end with Christ the King. For All Saints' Sunday we'll be blessed by the artistry of cellist Michelle Beauchesne for the opening and closing voluntaries. In addition, she'll join the choir in Gerike's *Sing With All the Saints in Glory*. The choir will also be presenting Daniels' *How Shall I Sing That Majesty?*.

On November 12 two recently composed anthems will be sung: *All That Hath Life and Breath Praise Ye the Lord*, by Rene Clausen, an extremely energetic mix of lush chords

and triumphant sound; and Mack Willberg's *Jesu, the Very Thought Is Sweet*, a lovely setting of familiar text.

Patricia Teele will be at the organ on the 19th while I'm at a conference in Chicago. The choir will be singing Goemanne's *Whom Should I Fear* and John Ness Beck's *Offertory*. I'll be returning to the console for Thanksgiving.

Culminating the liturgical year is Christ the King Sunday on the 26th, which will begin with what's become traditional here at Ascension: H. Hamilton Smith's exciting *Choral Fanfare for Christ the King*. The service will include the majestic *O God, Beyond All Praising* by Holst/Proulx and Michael Sutton's *The Journey Blessing*.

—Debora Huffman
Director of Music and Organist

New of Ascensionites

Elijah Baffes surgery has been postponed to November 16. We need more A+ blood donors. See Fr. Michael for more information.

Susan Marie & Christopher Darlington Harrison were baptized Sunday, October 29. Proud parents are Robert & Pamela Harrison.

Mark Dickson now owns a framing shop in Glendora.



*Scenes from the Blessing of the Animals.
Thank you to everyone who helped make the*

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

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The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

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Notes from the Sr. Warden

Whenever I think of our church, a fragment of an e. e. cummings' sonnet comes to mind- "I thank You God ...for everything/ which is natural which is infinite which is yes." It's the "which is yes" part that keeps reverberating in my mind when I come to our church because time and again I see that Ascension is a YES place.

We are a YES place because the "YES, I will help you do it" response is so frequently there whenever anyone asks for help. When someone wants to try something new that will be good for the youth or the choir or one of our outreach programs, the answer is YES, let's try out the idea and see if it works. When Ascension is asked by the community to sponsor a blood drive, provide a voting site, supply a meeting place for a LEAD meeting or for a place to hold a recital, the answer is YES.

One way we at Ascension

express our YES is by filling out a pledge card. Those pledges supply the money it takes to say YES to the work of our church. Our financial YES is essential because it enables our Vestry to say YES to our many budget requests.

Our clergy are great at saying YES – YES to pastoral visits, YES to attending meetings, YES to giving up part of their days' off if there is a special need, YES to all of our requests for help or guidance or comfort. We ten o'clockers recently saw Dr. Huffman say YES when the organ said no, and the choir echoed her YES by shifting from the back of the church to the front and singing beautifully with piano accompaniment. Call Karen, our church secretary, with a request and hear her YES. Come to a Staff Meeting, a Parish Ministry Council Meeting, a Vestry Meeting; there too you will see YES in action.

Our youth are YES contributors – YES to running the Halloween party, YES to raising money for those less fortunate than they, YES to pledging their support for the Capital Fund Drive soon to start. Come to a Small Group Meeting and see the YES's that prayer and fellowship can bring. Most importantly, as we worship together each week, come and see how committed we are to saying YES to God. We at Ascension are YES people.

Thanksgiving is a time when we focus on thanking God for all the blessings of this life. In my prayers of thanksgiving this year, I will be thanking Him for everything about Ascension which is YES.

Happy Thanksgiving to you all!

e.e.cummings is a poet known for disregarding the rules of punctuation, word order and capitalization in order to create an effect. If you are interested in reading the entire sonnet, it is called "i thank You God. For most this amazing."

—Jean Rowe