



# The SPIRE

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

October 2005

## Our Core Ministries

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

## Catechesis

The 6th season of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has started. The 2005-2006 schedule of presentation will be posted on the Catechesis bulletin board in the Parish hall. If you would like to enroll your child in this program please call Elizabeth Wilson or Cameron Cox.

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## ✝ From the Rector

As the events of late August and early September unfolded, many people, if not most people asked why such a calamity of the magnitude of Hurricane Katrina could occur. While the choices made by humans – both good and bad – are explainable, the theological questions about nature, suffering and evil are more elusive. Since the beginnings of time, humans have struggled to understand why nature can be so good so much of the time and yet have such a destructive force on occasion. And believing people have asked, and have yet to fully understand, where God fits in these events. Theologians over the centuries have explained that for us to understand good, evil must exist as contrast. Others have reminded us that the course of nature, which includes all the good things - and hurricanes as well, does not exist for our convenience. We need to understand that we fit into the larger scheme of creation, but are not the center of the universe. Still other theologians have reminded us that as Christians, suffering is a real human experience, but that God in Jesus Christ has and does experience suffering with and for us. I believe that “why” is an important question

for which there is no easy, ready answer. In times like this, what we can do is an even more important question.

So what can we do as a parish? I know that we have sent money, and expert people (our own Roger Keith has gone to Louisiana) to aid the relief efforts. This must continue. Some have suggested that we might “adopt” a displaced family. While this is a worthy idea, we do not yet have a mechanism for effecting this in a systematic way. (FYI – the Parish House or old rectory is fully being used for ministries and program.) Our diocese is in the process of setting up a mechanism for congregations to be in relationship with affected parishes in Louisiana and Mississippi. I am suggesting to our Vestry and parish that this may be the most meaningful way for us to make a difference. As more information comes available, we will keep everyone informed. In the meantime, keep praying and giving.

—Father Michael+

PS –My thanks to everyone for their efforts to make our Ministry Fair on September 11 a wonderful event.

## Notes from the Sr. Warden

The Ministry Fair was a great success of information and fellowship. I hope that it heightened everyone’s awareness about the different opportunities we have at Church of the Ascension to answer the calling to serve God. I found it a wonderful chance to fully appreciate the community of Ascension. This is particularly relevant in the aftermath of the hurricane and flooding in Louisiana and Mississippi when it is so important to look beyond our own daily life and seek a way to make a difference in the greater community.

The Vestry will gather for its all-day planning retreat on October 1<sup>st</sup> to discuss the long-term needs of the Church and our congregation. This is timely as the annual stewardship campaign will start soon and we begin thinking about the capital needs to improve our buildings, grounds and on-going programs. The discussion about Church of the Ascension’s future will be ongoing, so please join in.

—Rob Stockley

## Youth Happenings

On your marks....get set....GO!!! The fall is here and our new Youth program has a lot to offer this year. If you are in 7<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, you need to get away for a moment from all the stress of life and take a time of refreshment and fun with these upcoming events for YOU:

Every Sunday from 9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. is our new **Sunday Morning Meeting**. We have a Jr. High group and a Sr. High group. We talk, eat, listen, eat, read, eat, pray and eat some more! We really participate in our spiritual quest and relationship with God in ways that really help us in our everyday lives and our formation. So come in the Youth Room of the Parish House and chill!!

If Sunday is not enough for you to explore your relationship with Christ, then you asked for it..... "Thursday Night Blasts" once or twice per month will give you the break you need for 90 minutes (6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.) of deeper spiritual understanding on the is-

sues you are coping with today. Honest and open discussion on what you want to know. Take a look at our schedule just for this quarter:

### Thursday Night Blasts Schedule

10-27 *Why pray?*

11-17 *Parents need to chill?!*

12-08 *Hot Topic: The Down-Low (Jr. High)\**

12-15 *Hot Topic: The Down-Low (Sr. High)\**

\* *Parents permission slips required*

Don't forget the "Youth Happenings" during each month for fellowship and fun for the rest of 2005!!

### Youth Happenings Schedule

10-02 *Assisting with the Blessing of animals*

10-9- *4:00 p.m. Swim Fiesta at the Beach's home*

10-29 *5:00 p.m. Halloween Party and Haunted House*

12-11 *4:00 p.m. Christmas Party & trimming the tree*

P.S. There were no winners to last month's quiz the candy bar is getting moldy!

## Small Groups

The Small Group offerings for the fall are as follows:

### Sundays 9:00 —10:00 a.m.

- A Study of Paul's letter to Timothy, facilitator: Jean Rowe, in the library.
- A study of the current Sunday lectionary, facilitator: Fr. Larson, at the Gooden School.
- A study of the miracles of Jesus, facilitator: Halcyon Koerber, in the Parish House.
- A study of spirituality, facilitator: Hal Barber, in the Rector's Office.

### Tuesdays 7:30—9:00 p.m.

A study of Genesis, facilitator: Michelle Rohrer, at Michelle's home in Sierra Madre.

### Wednesdays 7:00—9:00 p.m.

A study of the great books, facilitator: Alyce Rohrer at Alyce's home in Pasadena.

You are invited to become a part of any of these groups who meet in the spirit of Christian fellowship, prayer, and mission.

## Welcomers or Greeters?

There has been a little confusion between "greeter" and "welcomer." Our greeters do greet, but they have other duties presenting the communion elements or ushering.

The welcomer is a specific ministry in and of itself. It is INTENTIONAL. It is one of our core ministries – PRESENCE – yes Presence means our historic church, our Memorial Garden and our grounds. But there is another aspect of Presence – the human presence, and more ATTENTIVE presence which says "I am here for you today."

Webster defines "welcome" to receive gladly into

one's presence (another's presence). This heightened awareness of the stranger/visitor/guest in our midst says "allow me to be of service to you" Let us all imitate Jesus in his invitation "come and see" what we have to offer you in our community of Ascension.

--Carol George

P.S. I invite you all to take a look at the new format of our visitor/guest book.

# October 2005

## Upcoming Dates

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 9:00 Altar Guild 9:30 NAMI Walk Vestry Retreat
2 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass	3 6:30 pm Group Leaders Meeting	4	5 10:30 Staff Noon Mass 7:30 Choir	6 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	7 Noon Mass	8 9:00 Altar Guild
9 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass 4:00 Happening	10	11	12 Noon Mass 7:30 Choir	13 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	14 Noon Mass	15 9:00 Altar Guild Spire Deadline
16 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass	17	18 6:30 pm Vestry Mtg	19 10:30 Staff Mtg Noon Mass 7:30 Choir	20 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	21 Noon Mass	22 9:00 Altar Guild
23 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass Noon Newcomers	24	25	26 Noon Mass 7:30 Choir	27 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum 6:30 pm Blast	28 Noon Mass	29 9:00 Altar Guild 5:00 pm Halloween Party
30 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass	31 Halloween					

- October 1—NAMI Walk at 9:30 am at Santa Fe Dam
- October 1—Vestry Retreat
- October 2—Blessing of the Animals at 11:45 in the Memorial Garden
- October 9—Youth Happening Swim Party at 4:00 at the Beach home
- October 10—Karen returns from vacation
- October 15—Spire Deadline for November issue
- October 18—Vestry Meeting
- October 23—Newcomer Reception in the Parish house at 11:30
- October 29—Parish Halloween Party and Haunted House at 5:00 hosted by the Youth
- October 30—Parish Ministry Council at Noon in the Parish Hall
- November 6—Fall Evensong

## Notes from the Loft

Do you enjoy singing? Do you have what it takes to wear the vestments (choral, that is)? If you do, plan now to add your voice to Ascension's Parish Choir, a vital part of our worship September through May. There are many reasons why you should want to join the choir—here are just five (adopted from the internet):

**Character.** Choir helps build character. People who sing in the choir give up one night a week and worship faithfully. These people have real character. (it may be said that some members of the choir are real characters!)

**Healthy.** Choir makes you healthy. How often do you exercise your lungs? Your lungs are important to living. If you really want to enjoy living and be healthier, come and sing with us!

**Otherwise.** Otherwise it won't be as much fun if you're not there. Otherwise you'll miss many opportunities to offer God your expressions of praise and adoration. Otherwise you'll miss great camaraderie with fellow musicians.

**Interesting.** You'll sing interesting (even great) music. You'll hear interesting comments about your singing. You'll meet some interesting characters (see letter 'C'). Your interest in worship will increase and grow as you prepare to participate in the next Sunday's worship.

**Relaxation.** After a stressful day of decision making—should I sell this, buy that, watch this, cook that—it will be so relaxing to have someone say to you 'Sing this'! R also stands for Reading, as in music—join the choir and learn to read music, or improve your music-reading skills.

But wait—there is more! On February 26, 2006 the Parish Choir will be participating in the festival chorus for Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, sponsored by the Mark Thallander Foundation, to be held at the Cathedral of our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. You won't want to miss this opportunity to sing with your Ascension colleagues under the baton of the legendary Anton Armstrong of St. Olaf College and to experience the artistry of organist Frederick Swann. (Those of you not in the choir may want to attend the event—so be sure to mark your calendars.)

If you're interested in joining the choir, please see me or any member of the choir for further information. CIRCLE THE DATE: Sunday November 6, FALL EVENSONG. Details to follow.

—Debra Huffman, Organist/Choirmaster

## News of Ascensionites

Congratulations to **Michelle and Alan Tierney** and older brother **Nicholas**, on the birth of, **Jaxson Ryan** born September 13, 9 lbs 6 oz. Proud grandparents are **Roger and Debbie Keith**.



*Pictured at the Ministry Fair September 11 (from left to right) are Diane Rhodus, Lily Anderson and Kathy Anderson.*



*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**

## Curate's Comments

I was quick to volunteer and assist with the construction to build a wall in the Library, so I could have a private office. The hands-on experience I received not only made me aware of the hard work it takes to make a wall, but also gave me satisfaction of the investment of a new space that will serve the parish well for years to come.

It is the same with the various ministries here at Ascension. After participating at the Ministry Faire, I realized how the hands-on experience people receive in ministry not only shows each member's hard work, commitment and their God-given talents, but also their satisfaction of investing in the present and future growth of this parish. It was so powerful to see men

and women together demonstrating their "callings" in the body of Christ. To witness people signing up to participate in "building" various types of ministries was truly awe-inspiring; hats off to all the construction workers for Christ.

If you have never had the chance to gain some "hands-on experience" in the parish in any of the components of ministries in building people's lives through Christ, then we invite you to pray about it and speak with either Father Bamberger, Diane Rhodus or myself about how God can use you in Liturgy and Worship, Pastoral Care, Christian Education or Outreach ministries. There are a plethora of opportunities. We need Christian Education teachers, youth leaders, members to assist our Jr. Warden

for our Church and Grounds Committee, etc. In fact, the most recent idea that has come up is a Men's Breakfast once every other month to have all the men come together to have fellowship, listen to guest speakers on spiritual topics related to men's issues of life and to work together in finding ways to "build" our parish through the various ministries.

God uses people that would be willing to get ministries off the ground and build them up. Who will the people be to invest time and talents in something that will serve the parish well for years to come? Is it you? Pray about it! Perhaps you too can quickly volunteer and assist with our spiritual "construction".

—Barrett Van Buren