



# The SPIRE

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

October 2007

## Our Core Ministries

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

## Blessing of the Animals

*A celebration of the  
Feast of St. Francis on  
Sunday, October 7th,  
at 11:45 in the Out-  
door Worship Area.*

*All of God's creation  
welcome!*

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## ✝ From the Rector

Because we live in Southern California, and because we are Christians – and of the Episcopal flavor at that – we live in a weird tension of multiple realities whether we like it or not. Everywhere we turn, we are faced with differences – our neighbors often look different from us, we hear many languages in the course of our day, and some of us speak more than one language and we cross cultural lines all the time. And we are Christian people, with a set of core values that we have inherited from the generations before us, but we are constantly in the presence of people from other faith traditions, and a growing number of people with no faith tradition. And yet we often wish that everyone could be like us. Or at least think the way we do. It is strange that the more difference we encounter, the more homogenous we wish our world, or at least our little part of it, could be. Christendom as a whole, the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Los Angeles, our own parish, and even some of our households are struggling with this tension of realities. I'm sure our bishops from LA might well have been wishing that everyone thought like they do while they were meeting with the other bishops recently in New

Orleans. It is hard to really engage differences, especially when they involve beliefs that we consider central to our understanding of reality. At times it is hard to believe that there could be any sort of common ground, and the word compromise has a really bitter taste to it. I found it ironic that at the same time I was praying for some sort of compromise and discovery of common ground for the bishops in New Orleans, the so-called President of Iran was in New York, and I couldn't for the life of me see anything at all in common with the man. I was glad that Columbia University gave the forum to the man so that we could all hear him and see him for who he is. But clearly he lives in a different reality that we do. What a clear example of seemingly intractable and irreconcilable differences. So what are the virtues that we are to be praying for God to give us in these times? Patience and humility immediately come to mind, but I believe that now more than ever we should be asking for faith, hope, and love. We must trust that God is with us, that God's desire is our future, and that God's love for us will enable us to reach out in love across the very real differences we encounter constantly.

## Upcoming Event

Our children are back in school, the Youth Group has resumed, along with Small Groups and Catechesis, and our Choir is back in their loft for the Rite II Service. Now that we are back to a semi-regular schedule, the Hospitality Committee encour-

ages you to either host a Coffee Hour, or sponsor one (recommended sponsor is \$25.00).

Hospitality Committee Members:

Mary Baffes, Elizabeth Callihan, Richele Duffy, Lisa Reed.

# Formation

***STRENGTH FOR THE JOURNEY:*** A new ministry is forming to support parishioners in their final stages of life, particularly those in hospice programs. We will visit these parishioners regularly, run errands and provide food if needed, and pray with them. We also hope to meet together Sundays as a Small Group, to share and pray. If interested please call Diane Rhodus, Barbara Larson or Halcyon Koerber.

## Small Groups

September-October 2007

A Study of Job – Meets Sundays from 9 – 10 am in the Parish House. Leader: Jean Rowe

Spiritual Gifts and Calling – Meets Sundays from 9 – 10 am in the Parish House. Leader: Halcyon Koerber

A Study of the Psalms – Meets Sundays from 9 – 10 am in the Parish House. Leaders: Joy Barry and Mandy

Macintosh

A Study of each Sunday's Lessons – Meets Sundays from 9 – 10 am in the church library. Leader: Fr. John Larson

A Study of Second Kings – Meets Tuesdays from 7:30 – 9:00 pm at the home of Glenn and Michelle Rohrer. Leader: Michelle Rohrer

The Rector's Forum – Currently reading *Tokens of Trust* by Rowan Williams. Meets Thursdays from 9 – 10 am in the rector's office. Leader: Fr. Michael Bamberger

Young Families Dinner Group – Meets monthly for dinner and fellowship. Contact Laura and Corbett Wilcox for information.

Tuesday Night Dinner Group – Meets at 6 pm at the Monrovia Restaurant at Colorado and Myrtle Aves. in Monrovia for dinner and fellowship. Contact Beth Smith Kellock for information.

# Youth Happenings

## Get ready for a fun-filled and spooky October!

Remember that on Sunday, October 7, you will be our talented "Animal Wranglers" for the Annual Blessing of the Animals. Be at Ascension starting at 9am and until after the 10:15 service to fulfill your pet-wrangling duties!

There is an opportunity to join with the Deanery 5 Youth Ministry team on October 19-21 for a retreat to Catalina Island. Cost is \$225. You must ACT FAST if you want to go! Call or e-mail Allison by OCTOBER 7

for more details.

It's the event you've been waiting for: the Ascension Halloween Party! Come to prepare the haunted basement for some thrills and chills at 12 Noon on Saturday, October 27. Lunch will be provided. After we decorate and prepare, stay until the party and watch some SCARY movies with your friends!

The party will be from 5:30-8:30pm.

And don't forget, we meet every Sunday from 9-10am in the Parish House Youth Room!

## Halloween Party

Join us for the annual Ascension Halloween Party and Potluck Saturday, October 27th from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Sign up in the Parish Hall and indicate what dish you are willing to bring. Come if you dare! Sponsored by Ascension Youth Group.

## Capital Funds Project Update

We are at the end of the road for phase 1 of the capital funds landscape project. This project took four months and was completed on schedule. The only remaining task is the installation of the lights on the pilasters, for which we are waiting for parts. The worship area has already been used for a baptism. Many comments from the community have expressed high interest and approval of the project, and even resulted in a few donations.

The conclusion of the phase 1 project does not relieve us of the normal maintenance projects around our facility. These projects don't get done by themselves, it takes your involvement. When your verger requests a Saturday work day, please respond for there is something for everyone to do to maintain our beautiful grounds and buildings.

# October 2007

## Upcoming Events

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 6:00 pm Group Leaders Mtg	2	3 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	4 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	5 Noon Mass	6 9:00 am Altar Guild
7 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass 11:30 Bless Animal	8	9	10 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	11 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum 10:30 am Staff	12 Noon Mass	13 9:00 am Altar Guild
14 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass	15	16 6:30 pm Vestry Mtg	17 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	18 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum	19 Noon Mass	20 9:00 am Altar Guild 11:30 St. Mary's Wedding
21 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass	22	23	24 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir	25 7:00 am Mass 9:00 am Forum 10:30 am Staff	26 Noon Mass	27 9:00 am Altar Guild 5:30 pm Halloween Party
28 8:00 Mass 9:00 Educ Hour 10:15 Mass	29	30	31 Noon Mass 6:00 pm Mass 7:30 pm Choir			

- October 7—Blessing of the Animals at 11:30 located in the outdoor worship area
- October 7—9 Fr. Michael is away at a conference
- October 16—Vestry Meeting
- October 20—St. Mary's Guild Meeting and Luncheon in the parish hall
- October 27—Parish Halloween Party at 5:30 pm in the parish hall
- November 4—Daylight Savings time ends
- Choral Evensong will be held on November 11 at 5:00 pm

## Notes from the Loft

Did you happen to notice that the beautiful DOMINUS REGIT ME, the paraphrase of Psalm 23 we recently sang as a sequence hymn, was composed by John Bacchus Dykes (1823-1876, Durham, UK)? Actually, our hymnal contains twelve works composed by the Rev. Dykes. Undoubtedly, thanks to my summer trip, I'm particularly sensitive to the Dykes collection, but I definitely feel an immense appreciation for his significant contribution to Anglican hymnody; indeed, we are truly indebted to this man for the great tradition he left us.

The summer months gave our choir the opportunity for a well-deserved break, with our worship adopting a more solo/chamber mu-

sic approach. Many thanks to the choir members who graced us with solos during the summer months: Susan Beach, Colette Ostrye, Mark Riebs, and Lavette Teague. I also hope you enjoyed the contributions of harpist Robyn Ring.

Now that fall activities have resumed, the choir is back in the loft – and, indeed, this is good! Ascension's choir is delighted to welcome three new members: Natalie and Patrick Dougall, and Ted Calleton, soprano, baritone, and tenor, respectively. There's still a need for one more tenor, so if you fit the bill, I'd love to hear from you. It's an incredible joy to make music unto the Lord – I can't recommend it highly enough.

Finally, be sure to MARK YOUR CALENDARS: CHORAL EVENSONG on Sunday, November 11, at 5:00 p.m. The service will be followed by a wine and cheese reception sponsored by St. Mary's Guild and Ascension's Hospitality Committee. Details to follow in next month's Spire.

—Debora Huffman,  
Organist & Director of Music

## News of Ascensionites

Welcome to **Aubrey Braunwyn Thorn** born September 6. Proud parents are **Nathan & Stella Thorn**.

Congratulations to **Jennifer Tweddle** and **James Jesser** were married here at Ascension on September 15.

**Ethel West** passed away Sunday, September 23. Services were held at Ascension on Friday, September 28.

## St. Mary's Guild

At the Annual Evensong, St. Mary's Guild will once again have our fundraiser event during the reception following Evensong. If you are cleaning out closets and cupboards; we are accepting "Elegant Elephants" donations to sell. Please contact Wilma Clark who will collect your donations. An "Elegant Elephant" can be old jewelry, china, crystal or you might have Christmas decorations that you no longer use. Don't forget, we will once again be selling raffle tickets for the Christmas Afghan. Mark your calendars for November 11, 2007 for the wonderful sounds of Evensong!

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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## From the Sr. Warden – Jim Larew

First, I'd like to thank Halcyon and crew for a wonderful Ministry Fair last month. This informative event really has my cogs working overtime. With Ministry Fair still on the brain, stewardship season upon us, and a capital project to finance, it dawns on me that we're not going to get off so easy as if only by praying for great stuff to emerge at Ascension. As the feisty cartoon below illustrates, God does leave some/most things up to us.

I got my hands on a proof of Brian McLaren's new book, Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and A Revolution of Hope. At first it was okay, but when I stopped skimming and started reading, I appreciated McLaren's talent for knowing how to stir a pot without letting it boil (HT front and back to Marko). He is a master of properly placed emotion, of framing Jesus' stories so that we might frame and deconstruct our own to make God's difference in someone else's life.

Take Episcopalian, Sara Miles, author of Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion published earlier this year. She took her first communion in an Episcopal Church at age 46 and everything changed. She realized that "what I'd been doing with my life all along was what I was meant to do: feed people" and started a food pantry in her gritty San Francisco neighborhood. Don't get me wrong; we are doing terrific ministry at Ascension. Still, I've asked our Vestry to journey on an exploration of how our village church would not only continue to thrive and serve, but how Ascension will more *fully* live out its mission to God's satisfaction. How will Ascension grow in Christ so that we might deepen our ministries such as Youth Ministry, Senior Care, service to the needy, just to name a few, on a more permanent and ongoing basis?

I believe that we are a community with a desire to live openly. I be-

lieve God will reveal the truth to us from both likely and unlikely sources. I fully expect God to stir our pot by asking us to get off our knees once in while and walk with Him.



Source: The Ongoing Adventures of ASBO Jesus

Youth of the Ascension:  
Wigged out by homework and tests?  
Check out Morten Lauridsen. The dude sounds old and foreign, but he's actually new and a homeboy, hanging out at Dr. Deb's USC Thornton School of Music. It's sure to calm the nerves and inspire visions of A's dancing through your noggin. Check it: <http://www.hyperion-records.co.uk/details/67449.asp>, click on the MP3s on the lower left. —