The September 2026 SPIRE

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

Upcoming Events

Please see the calendar on page 4 for an updated list of events.

PARISH SURVEY DEADLINE IS SEPT 20.

SEE ONLINE LINK IN YOUR E-MAIL, OR TURN IN PAPER COPIES TO THE ENVELOPE ON THE BULLETIN BOARD GOING INTO HAWKS HALL OR MAIL IT IN.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

From the Rector

As one might expect from someone rapidly nearing retirement, I am in a season of letting go. A month or so ago, I resigned as Dean after 20 some-odd years. By resigning, I let go of the Very part of my title. Jokingly, I am now the somewhat Reverend Canon Michael Bamberger.

Some weeks ago, I turned over all the stuff I used to file the permit for the city's Annual Candlelight Walk. After organizing this event for many years, I believe St. Rita's will probably take on this task this year.

I am anticipating letting go of a significant amount of stuff in my office, including my library. Some of this material is stuff I have been accumulating for more than 40 years. My Dodger stuff is going with me to the grave. But you can expect a potlatch some week soon. I'll be putting out some of this stuff in the parish hall, and these items will be free for the taking.

There are other elements of letting go at work. For years, I have created the agenda for Vestry meetings. Now your Wardens – Walker Williams and Marie Prentice - are handling that task.

Letting go feels both liberating, and at the same time a bit of a loss. We'll just see how the process unfolds.

Blessings,
Father Michael+

Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 4th

Blessing of the Animals is conducted in commemoration of the October 4th Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis, arguably the most beloved of the named Saints, was particularly fond of animals of all breeds. The community is invited to bring your animals, no matter how big or small, breed or religion. Some animals may require a leash or a container, so keep that in mind.

All of God's creatures are welcome!

AUGUST 2026 Pledge Payment Snapshot

2026 Budget	$165,000
YTD Budget:	$110,000
YTD Actual:	$108,795
Difference:	$-1,205

I miss writing Real Life/Real Faith monthly. Maybe that will change? But for the moment, let's talk about difficult people.

If you're like me, you're often frustrated and wondering why are we all so busy judging others and pointing fingers. Why can't we all just get along? I'm old enough to remember a time when getting along was so much easier.

Luke 6:36-38 offers us sound advice: "I tell you, love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You'll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously even when we're at our worst. Our Father is kind; you be kind.

"Don't pick on people, jump on their failures, criticize their faults—unless, of course, you want the same treatment. Don't condemn those who are down; that hardness can boomerang. Be easy on people; you'll find life a lot easier. Give away your life; you'll find life given back, but not merely given back—given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity." (Translation: The Message)

Be well, be blessed, be generous with yourself and others.
Deacon Ed+

IT'S HALLOWEEN TIME!!!!

Once again we will be distributing Halloween Candy on October 31!!!!!

Please bring candy donations (large bags of individually wrapped pieces) to church and they will be safely stored until the ghoulish night...

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 1, 2026

9:30 EUCHARIST W/ CONFIRMATION

POTLUCK COFFEE HOUR

RECEPTION HONORING FR. MICHAEL & DEBBIE

2-5PM IN HAWKS HALL

(INVITE TO FOLLOW)

FRIENDS IN DEED*

Please join in Ascension's monthly collection of specific "Gold Items" for Friends in Deed. They include canned tuna and chicken, hearty soups, stew, chili, pasta and pasta sauce, peanut butter, cereal, rice, oil, sugar, flour, fruit juice, and vegetable juice (V8).

Look for the donation bin at the back of the church.

A Call to Choir

Stephen Marshall
September 2026

As I approach marking one year as Ascension's Director of Music and Organist, I am excited to invite people of any age to sing in Ascension's Choir! I am thrilled with the four committed and capable singers we have had over the past year and can assure you they would join me to welcome YOU with great enthusiasm.

THE DETAILS:

- Ascension's choir meets each Sunday 9:00-10:00AM in the choir/organ loft to rehearse that Sunday's hymns and to work on an occasional anthem.
- The choir sings each Sunday for the 10:15AM Worship Service, helping me to lead the congregation in singing.
- Occasionally, the choir sings a special anthem, usually during the Offertory.
- Our first official rehearsal of the new choir season will be Sunday, September 13, 2026, 9:00AM.

The role of the choir in the Episcopal Church spans hundreds of years and holds a place in Christendom as a strong leader in liturgical and worship music. If this information sparks something inside you, please contact me or just show up at our first rehearsal, September 13, 9:00AM. I look forward to hearing about your "call to choir"!

HELLO FROM YOUR TRANSITION/SEARCH COMMITTEE.

A FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION IS: WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN THE SEARCH PROCESS?

The first step in the process is the Parish Survey, which you have received either by e-mail or in paper form. Please be sure to fill out the questionnaire and return it to Ascension (if in paper form) by September 20.

The completed data from the survey will then be entered into the Parish Profile. The profile describes our parish to interested applicants. When completed, our profile will be posted by the Diocese to the entire Los Angeles Diocese. If need dictates, the profile can also be posted nationwide.

Clergy throughout the diocese can express their interest by submitting a Clergy Profile. The Transition Committee will get to know candidates through their Clergy Profiles, phone calls, videoconference interviews, and intensive personal meetings.

Candidates may be recommended by parishioners as well. All ordained Episcopal or Anglican priests in good standing and under the age of 72 are eligible. Parishioners who are thinking of nominating a priest should discuss that nomination with the individual to see if they are interested in applying for the position before recommending the individual to the committee.

Candidates identify their interest by filing an application with the Diocese. The Diocese vets each applicant and then passes their information on to the committee for consideration if the candidate qualifies according to canon standards.

Please be aware that the search is confidential. No committee member is allowed to discuss whether any particular priest will be, is, or was a candidate. Members will not talk about any aspect of the discernment discussions with any candidates.

Be assured that the transition/search process of our parish is in good hands and that our committee will follow the Holy Spirit's guidance as we discern who will be the best fit for the next stage of our life at The Church of the Ascension.

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

WORSHIP, FORMATION, PASTORAL CARE, FELLOWSHIP, OUTREACH, PRESENCE

25 E. Laurel Avenue, Sierra Madre, CA 91024 ~ 626-355-1133 www.ascension-sierramadre.com

SEPTEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 10:00am-10:30 Gooden Chapel for Pre-K	**2** 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal Men's Group Monthly Luncheon/Noon Nano's Café RSVP to Fr. Michael 6Pm—Wed Night Dinner Group Meets	**3** 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	**4**	**5**
6 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	**7** 8:30am Yoga/Hall Labor Day Parish Office Closed	**8** 10:00am-10:30 Gooden Chapel for Pre-K	**9** 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal 6Pm-Wed Night Dinner Group Meets	**10** 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	**11**	**12**
13 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	**14** 8:15am-9:45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	**15** 10:00am-10:30 Gooden Chapel for Pre-K 7pm Vestry Meeting/Hall	**16** 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal 6Pm-Wed Night Dinner Group Meets	**17** 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	**18**	**19**
20 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	**21** 8:15am-9:45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	**22** 10:00am-10:30 Gooden Chapel for Pre-K	**23** 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal 6Pm-Wed Night Dinner Group Meets	**24** 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	**25**	**26**
27 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 1pm—5pm Free Press Meeting/Hall Fr. Bob/Private	**28** 8:15am-9:45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	**29** 10:00am-10:30 Gooden Chapel for Pre-K	**30** 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal 6Pm-Wed Night Dinner Group Meets			

Deacon Ed Vacation through October 10th

Spire Creator: Kim Lumino, Parish Administrator