



The SPIRE

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

JANUARY 2012

From the Rector

Dear Friends,

New Year's brings new opportunities. We are finishing 2011 in a strong place financially even after an ambitious remodeling effort. Looking ahead, 2012 holds much promise. There are many people to be thanked—a great stewardship team, generous givers, those who made provision for the Church of the Ascension in their wills, and—to paraphrase Public Television—parishioners like you. This giving enables us to focus more fully on our core ministries and on our vision statement. Our vision statement makes it clear that we are not just “in business” for ourselves but that we serve and exist for others as we reach out to each other and the community through our core ministries of Worship, Fellowship, Outreach, Pastoral Care, Formation, and Presence.

As a well-known rabbi once put it—“It’s time for an “I Have a Dream” speech.” My dream is that this year we will continue to tap into our fundamental health as a parish, discover new gifts of the Spirit, and reach out in love and generosity to each other and to our community and our world.



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Sunday, January 29, 2012, About 9:15 a.m.
Hawks Hall

The Annual Parish Meeting is a time for our church community to come together and discuss the past year, elect new leaders, and look at the future. **THERE IS SOMETHING NEW THIS YEAR!** In the spirit of community, we will be meeting between the 8:00 service and the second service (the usual 10:15 service) which will be held ten minutes after the Annual Meeting ends.



Why do we have an Annual Meeting?

Our parish for legal purposes is a corporation. We have Parish Bylaws which correspond to the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Los Angeles. Parishes must have an Annual Meeting to elect “directors” who form the Vestry. The Vestry has responsibility for the “temporalities” of the parish. It is the custom at Ascension that reports for the previous year are received (*read the reports on-line beginning January 23rd*), the budget for the next year—which the Vestry has already passed—is presented, and other business conducted. Our Parish Bylaws state that the Rector presides. In the absence of the Rector, the Senior Warden presides.

Who can attend?

Everyone interested in our parish can attend the Annual Meeting. Our Parish Bylaws require us to have a quorum of twenty voting members.

Who can vote?

The Diocesan Canons were changed a few years ago to include persons sixteen years and older as electors. Any baptized person who is at least sixteen years of age, has been attending services for the past sixty days, and is on record as giving is eligible to vote. Our Parish Bylaws and the Canons do not permit either proxies or absentee ballots.

The Verger's View



The Nov/Dec weather took a toll on the church properties. We lost two large trees from the Parish House property as well as the front of the fence. (We did get some firewood out of it though.) The new heating system is working well and much appreciated by everyone. We have also installed a new audio system in the nave so that soft-spoken readers may be heard in the rear of the church. The system includes a clip-on microphone for the celebrant, a recording system, and a stand-alone system for Hawks Hall.

We are arranging for the removal of the tree stumps in the Parish House side yard and the distribution of a truck load of (DONATED!) mulch in the parking lot to the gardens on the property.

If you want to see the changes first-hand while lending a hand, come to the Work Party on Saturday, February 4th from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

Mike Beach, Verger

Flower/Sanctuary Candle Sign-Up Sheets

Opportunities are available to donate flowers and sanctuary candles in memory of or in thanksgiving for loved ones or for special events in our lives. Please check the sign-up sheets in Hawks Hall for available dates. Checks for flower donations (customarily \$40.00) should be made payable to St. Anne's Altar Guild. Checks for sanctuary candles (\$12.00) should be made payable to Episcopal Church of the Ascension. All checks may be placed in the offering plate or turned in to the Parish Administrator.

Senior Youth Group

The youth will resume meeting on January 8th and continue working from the resource: *My Faith, My Life: A Teen's Guide to the Episcopal Church*. We will (of course!) continue to 'meet at the court' for some spirituality and basketball!

- 1/7 **Bad Weather Shelter Service Project**
- 1/8 ***The Baptism of our Lord***
- 1/15 ***Being Known* - Meet at the Basketball Court**
- 1/22 ***Going Fishing***
- 1/28 **Bishop's Ball**
- 1/29 **Annual Meeting - No Youth Group**

From Our Ministry Intern

When this month's issue of *The Spire* comes out, I will be studying for the General Ordination Exams (GOEs), which take place over four days the first week of the new year (Jan. 3-7). All candidates for ordination must write a series of seven essays covering seven canonical areas delineated as Holy Scriptures, Church History, Theology, Ethics, Contemporary Issues, Liturgics, and Theory and Practice of Ministry. Some questions are "open resource," meaning candidates may consult any relevant books we wish, some are "limited resource," meaning we may only consult certain texts, usually a Bible and worship books such as the Book of Common Prayer and 1982 Hymnal, and others are "closed resource," meaning the only resources we may scan are the inner recesses of our brains. The GOEs have been given every year since 1972 and are designed to standardize the tests given to all candidates for ordination rather than the previous process of diocesan examination, which varied widely as one might imagine.

Many of you probably already know that Fr. Michael and parishioner Lavette Teague have been readers for the exams for many years. They will do so again this February, reading exams from all over the country. Fr. Michael graciously offered a free preparation course in November to me and other local seminarians to help us understand how to approach the questions, which books to study or bring to any "open resource" questions, and test-taking tips. For example, though it seems obvious, Fr. Michael emphasized how important it is to answer every part of a question; many times examinees in their haste and stress have left out entire portions of a question, or worse, misunderstood and answered a question that wasn't asked. As a result of Fr. Michael's advice, my goal will be to be patient and make sure I understand the question before sketching out my answer. Now, if I just don't know the answer no matter how well I understand the question, I may be in trouble; and that's why I am asking for your help. Please pray for me and for ALL of my fellow seminarians and candidates around the country who will be taking these exams that we may be calm, patient, and trust in God and our various educations and experiences to provide the best answers we can. Thank you in advance for your prayers and good wishes! Faithfully, *Marianne*

Meet Our Vestry Nominees...



Richard Genece is the Residential Portfolio Manager of Energy Efficiency Programs in the Customer Energy Efficiency and Solar Division of Southern California Edison (SCE). Richard's Portfolio consists of over \$100MM in programs and incentives providing energy efficiency programs to Edison's 5.9MM residential customers. Richard earned his B.S. in Informational & Decision Sciences from Carnegie Mellon University and his MBA in International Marketing from Indiana University in Bloomington.

Richard has worked with SCE for over three years. Before SCE, Richard worked in several positions of increasing responsibility for General Electric, General Mills, Procter & Gamble, and Ameritech in Sales, Marketing, and Procurement.

Richard lives in Claremont with his wife Nadine. A "cradle to grave" Episcopalian, his paternal Grandfather was a Haitian priest and missionary who built several churches on the island of LaGonave, Haiti and first brought modern Christianity to the small island.

Susan Clifton is a life-long member of Church of the Ascension. Currently employed by Sierra Madre in their Community Services department, she attends both services regularly and currently serves as Eucharistic Minister and Lay Reader. Susan previously served on the Vestry, including a term as Junior Warden, and most recently was active in our Stewardship Campaign.



Kathy Calleton has been a member of the parish for many years. She and her husband Ted attend the 10:15 service (usually!). Kathy has served on the Altar Guild (as Directress as well), and is committed to seeing our parish grow. This will be her first term on the Vestry. In her professional life, she served in a variety of capacities in the legal field.



...and Our New Parish Administrator



In mid-December we welcomed as our new **Parish Administrator Kim Lumino**. Kim is a Sierra Madre resident, is married to Tony, and has two young sons. Anthony and Alex, She has an extensive background in computer technology and management. Kim will be in the office Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday.

SENIOR WARDEN'S BLOG

As I conclude my year as Senior Warden, I would, once again, like to thank the many parishioners and other supporters for their support and hard work for making this year so successful.

First, I would like to thank my wife and partner, Gloria, who has supported me throughout this process. Her ability to listen, advise, and understand the number of hours that need to be spent in order to do the job properly cannot be understated.

I would also like to thank and recognize the following:

- ◆ Father Michael and my fellow Vestry members for their efforts and support in all the changes that have occurred during this past year.
- ◆ To our anonymous donor who provided the Parish with the new PA system and to Ross Kellock and Mike Beach for researching, purchasing, and setting up this new sound system.
- ◆ To Allen Tierney, his wife Michelle, Tom Duffy, and our Youth Minister Coordinator Jobi Harrell for the new and inviting Website.
- ◆ To all of the new volunteers who have joined the team this year, allowing us to come closer to our goal of becoming a program Church.
- ◆ To Ted Bosley for his commitment to help support our Parish by offering to write grants for property improvement.
- ◆ To Patty Patano and her Staff who, along with Father Michael, have brought the Gooden School and the Church of Ascension closer together.
- ◆ To Jackie O'Sullivan for all her efforts in monitoring and supporting the many projects that we have embarked upon this year and for her commitment to resolving the financial concerns we had.
- ◆ To Jean Rowe for her patience and guidance throughout this year.
- ◆ To all the parishioners who have made pledges for the coming year and to Tom Duffy, David Mole and Lavette Teague for their financial expertise and guidance as we attempt to establish the operating budget for 2012.
- ◆ To all of the volunteers who serve our parish and make the Village Church the warm and wonderful parish of which we can all be proud.

Finally, on behalf of the Rector, the Stewardship Committee would like to thank the following parishioners who made their pledge this past month:

LuAnn Callihan • Wesley & Arlette Lind • Richard Lottridge • Kenneth Smiley • Patrick & Natalie Dougall •
Debra Huffman • Walter Wright

We also apologize for the misspelling of the following parishioner's names in last month's Spire:
Glenn Belden and Shelly Birdzell

We had a wonderful pledge season. Our goal was to have 100% participation, and we are currently at 80% . I would like to encourage those who have yet to pledge to turn in their card.

Thank you all for your support. *Gary*



A New Year's Resolution...

Tired of writing checks? Concerned that you may fall behind on your pledge commitment? Are there times when you just cannot make it to Mass but want to ensure that the Church will still receive your support? To save money, time, and worry, consider using **On-Line Banking** to make your monthly pledge.

On Line Banking is a safe, simple way to meet your financial obligations; and, at the same time, it provides you protection against theft by allowing you free daily looks at your checking and savings accounts.

Those of you who already use your computer to pay your monthly bills can simply add "The Episcopal Church of the Ascension" as a payee, noting your envelope number in the memo line and scheduling your offering to match your pledge commitment.

If you are unfamiliar with on-line banking, call or visit your bank and ask the financial officer to help you employ this simple way to pay your bills!

ONGOING STEWARDSHIP

Treasure - Time - Talent

The Treasures of Ascension

Happy New Year! Here's a New Year's Resolution for you, if you are still using the weekly offering envelopes to bring your offering to Mass, make a resolution to use your bank's online banking service for your Ascension offering. You can add Ascension as a "Payee" and schedule your offering as a weekly or monthly recurring payment. It's easy and convenient for you and ensures that your offering is received by Ascension in a timely manner in case you are unable to attend Mass. Be sure to include your last name and offering envelope number in the details or memo field in the online banking screen to ensure your offering is credited to you properly.

To start the year, we'd like to acknowledge the following people for what they DO for our Church and DEMONSTRATE within the community.

- ◆ Ann Shirvanian, for her cheerful weekly reminder phone calls to those on the Worship Ministry Schedule for the coming week (Ushers, Greeters, Servers, Presenters, Acolytes, Readers) to remind them of their upcoming service.
- ◆ Roger Keith, for taking on the job of Head Usher, an important role which helps ensure we have scheduled Ushers, Greeters and Presenters for Mass. Sam Mooradian recently retired as our Head Usher; he served as Head Usher for over 10 years.
- ◆ And all those who helped in the garden debris clean up efforts after the early December windstorm including Jose Aguayo, Mike Beach, Chris Bamberger, Tim Hayden, Jackie O'Sullivan, Billy, Emma, and Jessica Allen, and Kasey O'Sullivan.

Thank you all for your commitment to the Stewardship of the Church of the Ascension.

*If you know of a parishioner who should be acknowledged in this column, please contact
Stewardship Committee Chairman Gary Griffiths*

Financial Snapshot Jan.—Dec. 2011

Amount Pledged	200,000.00
Amount Received	220,936.14
Difference	20,936.14

Outreach: Lives We Touched in 2011

Thanks to all who contributed supplies, money and/or labor to put the kits together, we completed 300 hygiene kits for homeless men and women. We delivered the kits to the County USC office of Angel Interfaith Network to be distributed to homeless patients upon discharge.

We also collected a huge amount of supplies for the babies born to poor mothers at County USC. Thanks to everyone who contributed, but particularly to Scott Callihan who collected several car-seats, bassinets, and cribs, which we delivered to Angel Interfaith Network.

The CROP walk was a great success. We doubled both our contributions and our walkers; we had two walkers and \$350 in contributions last year; we made \$700 in contributions and had four walkers this year. Thanks to our Youth Group, in particular, to Avery, Laurie, and Thomas who walked and raised the money. We also donated a lot of canned food to the walk. Thank you to all the parishioners who supported the walkers and donated money and food. The walk overall raised more than \$36,000 for local area charities and projects in low-income countries sponsored by Church World Service.

We are scheduled to serve dinner at the Bad Weather Shelter on the 7th of January and the 11th of February. Look for the sign-up sheet for volunteers for both the events—please volunteer if you can.

Finally, Bronwyn Dodd reports that Ascension contributed \$659.18 to the United Thank Offering Fund.

Anna Thomas, Outreach

Cooking Classes for Ascension Kids & Friends



6 – 14 years old | Limit 8 Kids | Cost for the 6 week course: \$60.00 per child

The course includes:

Week 1: Homemade Mac 'n Cheese, Garden salad & Chocolate pudding

Week 2: Spaghetti and Meat Balls & Garlic Toast, Cesar Salad & Baked Apples w/Granola

Week 3: 30 minute Homemade Chicken Noodle Soup, Bread Sticks & Brownies

Week 4: Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes, Roasted Carrots & Ice Cream Sundaes

Week 5: Chicken Alfredo w/broccoli, garden salad, rolls & Cherries w/Cherry Vanilla Yogurt

Week 6: Roasted Chicken (thighs & legs), Stuffing, Fresh Green Beans & Cupcakes *(students are encouraged to invite one friend or family member to share this last night with us)*

Kids will go home with a full tummy and recipes to share with their families.

All proceeds will be donated to the Hospitality Account

Class Schedule:

Saturday, January 14, 21, & 28 – 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Friday, February 3, 2012 – 5:00 – 7:00 pm

Saturday, February 11 & 18 – 4:00 – 6:00 pm

Child's Name: _____ Age: _____

Parent's Name: _____

Parent's Contact #'s: Home: () - Cell: () -

Please list any food allergies: _____

Parent's signature authorizes his/her child to participate in this class and will not hold the Church of Ascension or Lisa Reed liable for any accident or injury that may occur.

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Please make checks Payable to: Church of the Ascension—In memo line, note "Cooking Class"

Coffee Hours

We all enjoy our Fellowship time following the Sunday Services, and we enjoy having a bite to eat while we visit and catch up on what has been happening during the week. Our Coffee Hour fare can range from bagels and cream cheese, donuts, or cheese and crackers, and, on some occasions, a full lunch. The Hospitality Committee is happy to help you organize your Coffee Hour by helping set up, arrange platters, etc. Don't forget that Cora is here to help with the setting-up and for the clean-up as well. If you want to celebrate a special occasion, such as a birthday, anniversary, a milestone in your life, or just because you want to celebrate life, please sign-up on the bulletin board and see one of the Hospitality members to verify the date. If you would like to sponsor a Coffee Hour rather than organizing the event yourself, a recommended donation of \$25 will provide a light fare for the Coffee Hour.

Hospitality Committee: Richele Duffy, Kate Duffy, and Lisa Reed

Notes From the Loft



A very heartfelt thanks to
Our Ascension singers who
brought such magnificent
music to us throughout Advent
and Christmas, and to

- ◆ All of you who generously contributed to the music fund that facilitated our festival choir;
- ◆ Our resident oboist, Sean Dougall, for assisting in worship on Christmas morning and for very capably solving the cypher mystery (which you'll understand if you attended the 10:30 Christmas Eve service . . .)

Of course New Year's is a time of new beginnings and genuine resolutions. I'd like to suggest a few possible resolutions for Ascension parishioners:

- ◆ Consider joining the choir; you'll nourish both your own soul and those of your congregant neighbors.
- ◆ Welcome our two new choristers: husband and wife Charley Noecker and Carol Rasmussen, who recently moved here from Boulder, Colorado. Charley and Carol, it's a delight to have you among us!
- ◆ Consider silent prayer and meditation on Sunday mornings beginning with the first note of the organ voluntary. Use this time to prepare your hearts for worship and to allow the same for your fellow parishioners. Even whispering—with all of its sibilants—can be a distraction to someone who's in contemplation. There's ample time to greet your neighbors during the passing of the peace and at coffee hour, so thanks for reserving these few moments before worship for meditation.

May God give us all a new year of peace, joy, and music!

Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

What Can I Give Him?

One of my favorite poets is Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), best known for her romantic poetry, children's poems, and devotionals. The children's pageant this past Christmas Eve featured her well known poem 'Love Came Down' set to music. Another lovely text by Rossetti, 'In the Bleak Mid Winter' (written some time before 1872), was published posthumously in 1904. This poem has also been set to music several times; and Gustav Holst's melody, published in the 1906 *English Hymnal*, is perhaps the best known. Many of you may find the words familiar.

*What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.*

Rossetti's words have proved to be timeless—particularly in *these* times when so many can relate to the words "What can I give Him, Poor as I am." As unemployment rates continue to grow, 2012 could very well be another year when many will continue to feel 'in transition.' But the uncertainties that we all face together are also incredible opportunities for us to move forward together and to continue to grow as God's people.

Ascension actually does more and accomplishes more each year as we, fulfilling Rossetti's suggestion, share ourselves. Through this sharing, we, like the shepherds and Wise Men, offer the most valuable gift we can bring to the Christ Child—our hearts.

Blessings, *Jobi*, Minister to Younger Persons

Directory Photos: LAST CALL!



When you look at your directory picture, do you recognize yourself? Your kids? Do your friends recognize you? If not, it is time to update (it will be a great way to break in your

new Christmas camera!). Send a recent .jpeg (with a simple background) to:
parish@ascension-sierramadre.com, stop by the office, or grab Mike Beach after Mass and say "Cheeeese!"

*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

January/February 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Feast of the Holy Name Keezer Baptism 10:15a.m. Mass ECPAC In-Gathering	2	3 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6:00 p.m. Dinner Group Resumes NEXT WEEK	4 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	5 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting	6 Feast of the Epiphany Noon Mass	7 Bad Weather Shelter
8 8a.m. Mass 9a.m. Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass Noon Parish Ministry Council	9	10 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group ANNUAL REPORTS DUE	11 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	12 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum	13	14
15 8:00a.m. Mass 9:00a.m. Ed. Hour & Choir	16	17 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group 7:30p.m. Vestry	18 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	19 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting	20	21
22 8a.m. Mass 9a.m. Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass	23 ANNUAL REPORTS AVAILABLE ON-LINE	24 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	25 SPIRE ARTICLES DUE 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	26 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum	27	28 Bishop's Ball Beverly Hills
29 8a.m. Mass 9:15a.m. ANNUAL MEETING 10:15a.m. Mass	30	31 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	1 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	2 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting	3	4 9a.m.—Noon Parish Work Day
5 ECPAC In-Gathering 8a.m. Mass 9a.m. Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass	6	7 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	8 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	9 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum	10	11 Bad Weather Shelter

STAYING CONNECTED THROUGH THE WEEK



SEARCH FOR: Sierra Madre Episcopal Church of the Ascension
 Connect with fellow parishioners, get updated calendar information, Parish Photo Gallery

CHANNEL NAME: AscensionSierraMadre (1 word)
 Videos of Parish Events, Special Services, and more!