

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

February/March 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass	2 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting	3 5pm-7pm Cooking class	4 9:00am-Noon Parish Work Party
5 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 Dinner 8:30am Stillpoint 4pm-6pm Cooking Class
12 8:00a.m. Mass 9:00a.m. Ed. Hour & Choir *NO CATECHESIS NEXT WEEK* 10:15a.m. Mass	13	14 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY	15 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	16 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting	17	18 4pm-6pm Cooking Class
19 8a.m. Mass *NO CATECHESIS* 10:15a.m. Mass	20 SPIRE ARTICLES DUE	21 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 5-7pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper 7:30 Vestry Meeting	22 Ash Wednesday Services 7am, Noon and 6pm 5:45p.m. Yoga 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	23 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 4pm-8pm Daughters of the King Meeting	24	25 11:30 Women of Ascension Luncheon
26 8a.m. Mass 9a.m. Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass Noon PMC Meeting	27	28 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	29 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 6:30 Meatless Potluck 7pm LENTEN SERIES BEGINS 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	1 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting	2	3 8:30-1:30 Leadership Retreat
4 8a.m. Mass 9a.m. Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass	5	6 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	7 5:45p.m. Yoga 6p.m. Mass 6:30 Meatless Potluck 7pm Lenten Series Continues 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	8 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum	9	10



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



The SPIRE

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

FEBRUARY 2012

From the Rector

Some years ago, the question was posed - "How do I know that I am a member of the Church of the Ascension?" At the time, I responded that this is a reasonable question because there are several ways to look at it and several answers as well. At the most basic and theological level, one becomes a member of the church - Christ's church - when one is baptized; and since Ascension parish is a local embodiment of the church catholic - that is universal --, anyone who is baptized and worshipping with us is a member. That's one answer.

Another way to look at the question is to see an intentional act of commitment to the local congregation as a sign of membership. In this approach, one demonstrates membership by "doing something." "Something" might include regular attendance at worship, participation in one of the ministry areas - formation or outreach, for example- or by filling out a parishioner information form. Still another sign of commitment (and a very important form of commitment) might be to make a financial pledge to the life and work of the congregation.

In a more formal sense, another sign of membership is the decision one might make to be confirmed or received by the bishop in the context of the parish life. For those already confirmed elsewhere, a letter of transfer can be requested from the previous congregation. All of these decisions lead to inclusion in the life of the parish.

Still another way to look at membership is relational - when you know some of the parishioners and they know you, then you are a member. (One wag has said that you aren't a member until you've hosted coffee hour and been scolded by someone for not cleaning up the kitchen - in this model, there are dozens of long-time parishioners who aren't members!) But seriously, a relational sign of membership is when you begin to make friends here and become a friend to those near you in the pews.

Another element of this question has come increasingly into focus. As we strive to live out our identity as "Your Village Church since 1885!" it seems that people who live in Sierra Madre tend (and are encouraged) to think of themselves as members here. Responding to the community's sense of belonging to Ascension, we are making changes in our wedding policy. These changes were announced at the Annual Meeting and will soon be found on Ascension's website

Growing members in our church all really boils down to embracing an inclusive and welcoming approach to membership that embraces all people. And it is the role of everyone to be the greeters.

Blessings, *MAB+*



In this Issue

From the Rector	pg 1
Intern's Message	pg 2
Ministry News	pg 2
News From the Loft	pg 3
Youth Update	pg 4
Misc/Events/Announcements	pg 4
Introduction to our new Senior Warden	pg 7
Calendar	pg 8



Upcoming Events

- Feb 4th**
Parish Work Party
- Feb 11th**
Bad Weather Shelter Dinner
- Feb 21st**
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
Vestry Meeting
- Feb 22nd**
Ash Wednesday Services
- Feb 25th**
Women of Ascension First Anniversary Luncheon
- Feb 26th**
Parish Ministry Council Meeting
- Feb 29th** Lenten Series Begins

From Our Ministry Intern

On February 22, we will start the season of Lent beginning with the observation of Ash Wednesday, a service of the church dating to at least the 8th century. As most of you probably know, this service is particularly notable for the marking of the sign of the cross on our foreheads with ashes. The most common association with the mark of these ashes is that of repentance, meaning that we desire to turn our lives around and return to God. Although in the Christian church this became a sign of personal repentance, ashes in the Bible typically have a more public or national connotation, such as when the prophet Jeremiah calls upon Israel to "roll in ashes" (Jer. 6:26) or when the king of Nineveh feels moved to sit in ashes (Jon. 3:6) in symbolic repentance for all his people. There is another meaning to be found in the ashes which are captured in the words typically used as they are marked upon our foreheads, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." In other words, the ashes are also a symbol of our own mortality and, thus, our dependence on God.

In a class I took last year, one of the doctoral students presented research on the history of Ash Wednesday and how important a service this has become in New York City since Sept. 11, 2001. Many New Yorkers spent days surrounded by and breathing in the ashes created by the tragedy. As a result, in Lenten observations the following year, individuals and churches that had never before participated in a service of ashes felt called to do so as a tangible way to express their sorrow. For them, the ashes became an opportunity to publicly lament our national wounding and a way to be in symbolic solidarity with those who had died.

When we receive the ashes this year, we may feel called to contemplate the aspects of our personal lives that we would like God to turn around, or we may feel called to pray for larger issues in the world around us or in solidarity with those close to us who suffer. But even as we enter the solemnity of the Lenten season, these dark ashes are a sign that God stands with us even in the darkest, driest, most seemingly dead places of our lives, and by knowing that, may we find hope and joy!

Marianne Zahn

From the Outreach Ministry....submitted by Anna Thomas

Bad Weather Shelter Dinner

The next Outreach event is the second Bad Weather Shelter Dinner on the 11th of February. This is an all-Parish event--there is a sign-up sheet on the Hawks Hall bulletin board for anyone who would like to participate, or you can contact Richele Duffy who is coordinating the event.

We need people to help with cooking and a group to help with serving, setting up the cots etc. Donations are always welcome.

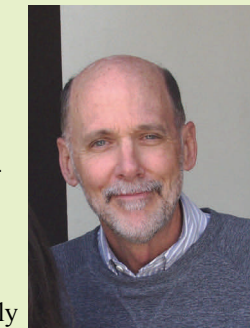
At our last dinner in January, we fed over 130 people at a cost of about \$1.60 each--and received many compliments on the cooking! Our services are very much appreciated by those who use the shelter; so if you can, please participate.



Nets for Life

Did you know that in Africa, every 45 seconds a child dies of malaria? That there are 250 million cases of malaria worldwide every year, resulting in 1 million deaths annually? In partnership with other organizations, Episcopal Relief and Development is providing insecticide-treated nets and grassroots training to the residents of malaria-prone areas in Africa. For only thirty cents a day for the forty days of Lent, you can save a family of three from the devastating effects of this disease. Speak to Diane Rhodus or Jackie O'Sullivan to learn how you can be a part of this life saving—and life-changing—effort. You can also read more about this project on the ER&D website at <http://www.er-d.org>.

Introducing Our New Senior Warden: Jay Packer



Some of you may recall that last year when Jay was elected to the Vestry, the January 2011 Spire reported

"In his professional life, Jay Packer is known as Dr. Jay Packer. Graduating from the University of Florida College of Medicine in 1979, Jay completed his pathology residency at LAC/USC Medical Center. Since 1984, he has been in the private practice of pathology in the Los Angeles area, currently working at St. Jude Medical Center in Fullerton.

Jay has been an Episcopalian for over twenty years. He and Donna, his wife of thirty years, moved to Sierra Madre in 1995. They attend the 10:15 service. Ten fifteeners know him as one of our congregational lectors. Jay is in the process of photographing our stained glass windows, photographs which will soon be on display on our updated website. He can also be seen at our Parish Work Parties" and, we can add, also participating in a Small Group, serving on the Discernment Committee, supplying photos of many of our parish events for the website, and being the 2011 Clerk of the Vestry.

We asked several folk who know Jay pretty well what they would want you to know about him, and these are their responses: "Jay is a gentle, intelligent man who possesses a wonderful sense of humor," "what I love about him is his slightly offbeat sense of humor," and "you can always count on Jay to be totally committed to whatever task he undertakes."

When we asked him to give us some information about himself that he thought the parish should know, Jay said in an e-mailed response to our request:

"I tried to come up with something about the new Senior Warden, but frankly, I'm just plain boring. In lieu of interesting, how about amusing but true?"

Dr. Packer is a graduate of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota. Macalester's football team holds the NCAA Division III record for the longest losing streak (50 games, 1974 - 1980), and was voted the second worst college football team of all time by ESPN.

Dr. Packer is an enthusiastic, if pedestrian, amateur landscape photographer, with Ansel Adams-esque aspirations of black and white grandeur. (See javpackerphotography.com)

Dr. Packer is distantly related to Alferd Packer, the first man in US history to be convicted of cannibalism. Alferd, trapped in the mountains near Lake City, Colorado in the winter of 1874, ate several of his deceased traveling companions; when he emerged from the mountains in the early spring, an insightful Native American reportedly observed, "Him too fat." There is an Alferd Packer Memorial Grille at the University of Colorado and an Alferd Packer Society in Washington, D.C.; their motto is, "Serving Our Fellow Man Since 1874."

Ash Wednesday Services

February 22nd

7 am Mass and Imposition of Ashes
Noon Mass and Imposition of Ashes
6 pm Mass and Imposition of Ashes

Wednesdays In Lent

(February 29th —March 28th)

6:00 Eucharist
6:30 Lenten Supper (soup or salad)
7:00 Lenten Series
Sharing Our Spiritual Journeys

2012

VESTRY OFFICERS

At the organizational meeting of the Vestry, the following members were elected or appointed:

Jay Packer, Senior Warden

David Mole, Junior Warden

Susan Clifton, Clerk of the Vestry

Leavette Teague, Treasurer

Tired of Writing Checks?... Consider using on-line Banking

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!

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 sheet 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.



Tuesday Prayer Continues

"There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

Join us for prayer each Tuesday 11:00-Noon in the Mary Chapel.

"Just as there are many ways to be hospitable, there are many ways to pray. When we are serious about prayer and no longer consider it one of the many things people do in their life but, rather, the basic receptive attitude out of which all of life can receive new vitality, we will, sooner or later, raise the question: "What is *my* way to pray, what is the prayer of my heart?" (Henri Nouwen, Reaching Out).

Perhaps the "prayer of your heart" may be to join us, knowing when two or more are gathered in His name, God is there. Ascension DOK offers Tuesday prayer to all who are seeking time during the week to pray with and for others.

Lay Ministry Opportunity

Have you considered becoming an Usher or Presenter? The members of this ministry assist at both Sunday services by welcoming our visitors, taking up the collection, and presenting the bread and wine to be consecrated at the altar. **We need Ushers & Presenters for the 10:15am service. Anyone interested in volunteering for this ministry, please call Roger Keith at 626-355-3862 or email him at roger@madre.net.**

Thank You

From the Fellowship Ministry... *submitted by Lisa Reed*

Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon

To the ladies of the Church of the Ascension,

Please join us for our 1st year anniversary Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon Saturday, February 25, 2012 at 11:30 am in Hawks Hall. Great food, lots of fun and laughter, and an enjoyable couple of hours of fellowship. Invite a friend to join us; it is always nice to meet and make new friends.

COFFEE HOUR SPONSORSHIPS

At the Annual Meeting, it was announced that an anonymous donor would match up to ten sponsored Coffee Hours at \$25.00 per Coffee Hour. Following the meeting, we received eleven sponsored Coffee Hours, which are all listed on the bulletin board in Hawks Hall. We still have some available dates for Coffee Hours. If you are interested in sponsoring a Coffee Hour, your \$25.00 donation will provide a light repast following your choice of Sunday morning services.

Please see a member of the Hospitality Committee for available dates. Cash or check is accepted; (please make your check payable to The Church of the Ascension).

Our many, many thanks to the "Anonymous" for their generous donation!

Respectfully, Lisa Reed, Richele and Kate Duffy



Daughters of the King

Our Chapter, Sisters of Joanna, meets on the fourth Thursday of the month at 4:30 pm in the Hawks Hall Library for Anglican Rosary making and at 6:00 pm for sharing prayer requests, thanksgivings, and specific requests from our Rector. February's meeting will be chaired by Linda Smith.

All women of the parish are invited to join us either at 4:30 or 6:00 pm or both for a "look see." Please feel free to let the office know if you would like a Daughter to call you to answer any questions you may have about our order.

Notes From the Loft

As Epiphany continues to unfold, our choral music will feature:

On the 5th ~

- * The incomparable "Gloria" from Mozart's Twelfth Mass;
- * "God Be in My Head," John Rutter's beautiful setting of the traditional text;

On the 12th~

- * John Ireland's powerful "Greater Love Hath No Man";
- * "There Is A Balm" by Bruce Saylor - gentle, soothing, renewing;

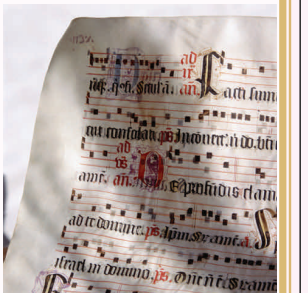
On the 19th we observe the Last Sunday After Epiphany with the Transfiguration of Christ. There is no greater anthem for this Sunday than Craig Phillips' "Transfiguration" - this remarkable work brings us to Christ in word and music. Our communion anthem, "Alleluia," will be a fitting end to Epiphany before we put the word to rest for six weeks.

February concludes with the first Sunday of Lent on the 26th:

- * "Search Me, O God" by K. Lee Scott;
- * Ralph Vaughan Williams' "O Sun of Justice"

I trust that this liturgical journey through music will be meaningful to you.

Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist



Youth Update

On January 7th, fifteen Ascension youth and young adults volunteered their evening to serve at the Pasadena Bad Weather Shelter. One crew led by Tom Duffy prepared, served, and cleaned up an entire spaghetti dinner for 135 people. Scott Callihan led another crew that set up tables and chairs for the meal as well as preparing the cots and bedding for the evening. Those that we served were kind and grateful for the meal and the shelter from the cold, and those who served were deeply moved and impacted by this wonderful experience!



Late January also included a trip to All Saints, Beverly Hills for the annual Bishop's Ball. A busy beginning to our year!

As Lent approaches, the Senior Youth will spend February studying and exploring concrete ways to deepen one's prayer life. We are excited to P.R.A.Y. (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield) and to show in our A.C.T.S. (Adorations, Confession, Thanksgivings, Supplications), ways to speak through prayer.

Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons

March Cursillo Weekends

The "Cursillo" (a short course in Christian living) is an international movement under the authority of the Bishop of each diocese for strengthening adult leadership in the church and other environments. The Cursillo method includes a three day weekend in which a team of laity and priests present the fundamental principles of Christian living (piety, study, action); ongoing small group meetings in which members make themselves mutually accountable for living these principles; larger meetings (Ultreyas) for sharing an on-going exploration of ways in which to bring the GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST to all environments through planned action both as individuals and in groups. Upcoming retreats in Pomona for Men, March 1—4 and Women, March 9—12. Additional information and candidate applications are available on the Hawks Hall bulletin board. For more information, contact Keiko Sakatani, Melinda Monachino, John and Barbara Larson, Adela Gomez, or Joy Barry.



2012 Parish Directory Photos

Last call before we go to press.....

When you look at your directory picture, do you recognize yourself? Your kids? Do your friends recognize you? If not, it is time for an update. Jay Packer will be taking photographs between the services and after the 10:15 service on February 12th and 19th in the child care room. Please add the photo shoot to your Sunday schedule so that we have an up to date picture of you and your family.

IT'S TRADITION!

Most of us know that **Shrove Tuesday** occurs the first Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, and some of us know that it officially ends the season of Epiphany. But did you know it began as a vigil for the starting of Lent?

The word *shrove* is the past participle of the English verb *to shrive*, which means to confess and receive absolution for one's sins by way of confession and doing penance. During the week before Lent, sometimes called Shrovetide in England, Christians were expected to go to confession in preparation for the penitential season of turning to God.

Shrove Tuesday as we have come to know it originated during the Middle Ages. Food items like meats, fats, eggs, milk, and fish were regarded as restricted during Lent. To keep such food from being wasted, many families would have big feasts on Shrove Tuesday in order to consume those items that would inevitably become spoiled during the next forty days. The English tradition of eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday came about as a way to use as much milk, fats, and eggs as possible before Ash Wednesday began.

So now that you know the history, plan on joining us February 21st for Ascension's own interpretation of this old Anglican custom. It's Tradition!

Shrove Tuesday Supper

Come have your fair share of Pancakes for Supper!

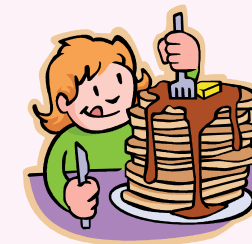
When: Tuesday, February 21, 2012

Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Where: Hawks Hall

Cost: \$6.00 Adults, \$4.00 Children twelve and under, or \$20 for a family of four

All proceeds will be donated to ECPAC



Proceeds (after costs) from this year's Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper will go to support the work of Friends In Deed. The food bank, located in Northwest Pasadena, serves hundreds of families every month. It is fitting as we embark on our Lenten journey that we share from our abundance with those in need.

Parish Work Party

There will be a Parish work party on Saturday, February 4th from 9am—Noon. There is a lot to do; no experience required. So come one, come all and we will have a great day of fellowship.

