



The SPIRE 2020

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



APRIL

Upcoming Events

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

ATTENTION!

Due to the cancellation of in-person Easter services, we will **NOT** be collecting money for Easter flowers and music. If you have already donated to either of these, the funds will be held over until our next festival.

Thank You

From the Rector

This is turning out to be the strangest Lent, Holy Week, and Easter of our lives. Perhaps our grandparents or great grandparents could tell us stories from 1917-1918 that echo our experiences.

I pray that this newsletter finds you and yours well. Some of you may know that Debbie's mother – Fay – has been hospitalized with the COVID 19 pneumonia since March 20th. Her condition seems to vary from day to day. The statistics we see in the news have a real face for our family. I ask for your prayers.

I'm not sure yet how Holy Week will go for us. I do know that we will observe our services online. Deacon Ed, Pastor Josh, and I are looking for creative ways that will help us through this important week in the life of the Church.

In case you are like me and inclined to want things to be as they have "always" been, let me assure you that historically the observance of Holy Week has changed repeatedly—even in my lifetime. The Book of Common Prayer 1979 reintroduced many of the elements of Holy Week and Easter that we observe here at Ascension. The 1928 BCP only had glimpses of what we now take for granted.

Finally, a reminder that the first Easter morning involved only a few people - the women at the empty tomb, the few frightened disciples, and, of course, the Risen Christ. It wasn't until Pentecost that the scriptures point to crowds.

Be safe and be well,
MAB+

March 2020 Pledge Payment Snapshot



2020 Budget \$221,000

YTD Budget: \$55,250

YTD Actual: \$54,134

Difference: \$-1,116

What to Know about COVID-19 and Blood Donation

The American Red Cross now faces a severe blood shortage due to an unprecedented number of blood drive cancellations during this coronavirus outbreak. Healthy individuals are needed to [schedule an appointment now to give blood](https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/dlp/coronavirus--covid-19--and-blood-donation.html) in the days and weeks ahead to help patients counting on lifesaving blood throughout this pandemic. Donating blood is a safe process and people should not hesitate to give or receive blood.

Use this link for more information from the American Red Cross on what to know about the Coronavirus and blood donation. <https://www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/dlp/coronavirus--covid-19--and-blood-donation.html>



**American
Red Cross**

Giving So that the Church Remains Strong

During this period of social distancing and online church services, we ask that you remember to give to Church of the Ascension. Your generous donations allow the church to continue to serve the community and ensure that as we move through this challenging period, the church will remain strong and emerge ready to address the needs of the larger community. Remember that you can give through the mail or electronically. The church website provides information on electronic giving (top of the webpage, right hand side under "Give") <https://www.ascension-sierramadre.com/give.html>. Also, if you wish to drop off a donation in person, please call in advance to make arrangements to guarantee someone is there to receive your offering in a manner consistent with current public health guidelines.

Your Servant in Christ, Gordon Tomaske, Sr. Warden



Rejoining Vestry

While I remarked to a number of people how much I enjoyed my recently expired term on vestry, I never expected to rejoin Ascension's lay leadership team so quickly. However, I have been asked to join vestry for the remainder of this year (9 months) and to serve during this period as Senior Warden. While I have found leadership positions in various organizations challenging, I always looked forward to Ascension's Vestry meetings as a time of fellowship and prayer. Ascension's leadership is thoughtful, positive, solutions oriented, and committed to the health of our church family as a community of faith.

I am also keenly aware that the pandemic has created new challenges and opportunities for our community. We are celebrating morning prayer via Facebook live, our small groups are meeting via Zoom.com, and we are all adjusting to this new normal of staying at home and social distancing. I am confident that far from dampening our community spirit, God will lead us to discover new ways of connecting and building our community.

To strengthen our bonds of family during this period, we will all need to proactively reach out to one another and learn a few new skills. If you have access to a computer, please check your email and church website for upcoming online events. Also be on the lookout for the occasional Phonevite from Ascension's leadership. Look up the Ascension Sierra Madre's Facebook page for notices on live Morning Prayer service and lookup Zoom.com to learn how to use this service to join small group activities. And as always, use your phone to call and check in on members of our church family.

Finally, feel free to contact our clergy or me if you have any questions or concerns.

Your Servant in Christ, Gordon Tomaske, Sr. Warden



First Wednesdays Lunch Group

POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE



House Church & Dinner

POSTPONED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE



With more time on my hands, I've been walking even more than usual. For the most part, people are friendly, keeping their distance, and sometimes even being chatty. The thing I've noticed most is that although there is a lot of concern and anger about Covid-19, there's also a deep sense of hope and a broadening realization that the world is bigger than our own little bubbles. It seems that keeping our faith real when life seems more real than usual can be a thing.

It's heartening to see that we're realizing that we are all in this together. No matter who we are, no matter where we are, we are realizing that we are all bound together globally.

Martin Luther King wrote: "In a real sense all life is inter-related. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the inter-related structure of reality."

All of humanity without exception is sacred. Each of us regardless of race, culture, religion, sexuality, politics, socio-economic status is the same – we are all wrapped in what Dr. King so poignantly describes as a single garment of humanity. And even more importantly, we are all, without exception, children of God. Our similarities far outweigh our differences and, lest we forget, the common garment of our humanity is lovingly woven stitch by stitch by God – each of us a thread.

We all share the same basics of life: birth, adolescence, and, if we're lucky, old age and ultimately death. Our journeys are far more similar than we know...far more similar than we dare to imagine.

Throughout our lives there is disorder created by sickness, accidents, loss of work, the loss of friends, and the loss of loved ones.

All of life's crises destroy our agendas, our security, our carefully laid plans. We reorder our lives and we move on. We struggle at first, but we move on – that's what we do as Christians.

Although we won't be celebrating Easter together at Ascension this year, we know that Resurrection isn't a single event in time that belongs solely to Jesus. It is a gift of love and a gift of grace freely given. There is always new life in Christ

As we wait in joyful expectation of a better and healthier world as promised by God and manifested to us through the life, death, and resurrection of his son our Lord Jesus Christ, be hopeful --always be hopeful.

Be well, be blessed, and live in hopeful expectation. Deacon Ed+



Lenten Goat drive with Episcopal Relief & Development

Goats are hardy, reproduce quickly, and can be raised in a variety of climates to produce staple items such as milk, cheese, and manure for farming. Each goat is \$80...let's get a whole herd! Look for the goat donation box in the church during Lent and please turn in your contributions by Palm Sunday April 5.



EXTENDED THROUGH TRINITY SUNDAY, JUNE 7TH. DON'T FORGET YOU CAN DONATE ONLINE AT <https://www.ascension-sierramadre.com/give.html>

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

This is certainly not the column I was expecting to write, but extreme circumstances dictate a change of direction. As I was reflecting on what to share with you, I received a message from the chaplain of the Association of Anglican Musicians which was based on Psalm 137:4 ~ *How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?* While the ground under our feet remains familiar, the atmosphere around us is strange, unsettling, even frightening. During this time of being sequestered, I encourage you to fill your time, or at least some of it, with music. Play a CD, listen to a music channel on cable, select some favorite YouTube videos, play the piano, and SING. I promise you, the land will begin to feel less foreign.

Since this Easter we'll be celebrating on Facebook or other electronic devices, I submit to you URL's for some of the hymns and anthems which were planned for our service:

*Processional hymn: a wonderful setting of *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* by Jeremy Bankson, performed at the First Plymouth Church, Lincoln, Nebraska:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+Jesus+Christ+is+Risen+Today+Bankson&docid=608005147777109275&mid=414263A52664704F1E99414263A52664704F1E99&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

*Offertory anthem: *Most Glorious Lord of Life* by John Rutter, sung by the Harvard University Choir:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GCKRe04WYE>

*Presentation hymn: K. Lee Scott's *Joy to the Heart*, performed by the St. George's Episcopal Church Choir, Nashville, Tennessee:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+scott+joy+to+the+heart&docid=608009399816292320&mid=E36BA30B36942A570CF3E36BA30B36942A570CF3&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>

*Communion anthem: *Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One* by Healey Willan, text from the Song of Solomon, performed by the Stanford Chamber Chorale:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+rise+up+my+love+willan&view=detail&mid=57B0DB6F6CC68C5AE25857B0DB6F6CC68C5AE258&FORM=VDRVRV>

*Closing hymn: *Hail Thee Festival Day*, sung by the Los Angeles First Congregational Church Choir:

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=youtube+hail+thee+festival+day&view=detail&mid=4BE0E4989B192FC73E234BE0E4989B192FC73E23&FORM=VIRE0&ru=%2fsearch%3f%3dyoutube%2bhail%2bthee%2bfestival%2bday%26form%3dPRLNCS%26pc%3dLEN2%26mkt%3den-us%26httpsmsn%3d1%26msnews%3d1%26rec_search%3d1%26refig%3dda5ad4d00d174e848d6eb5c6316af829%26sp%3d1%26qs%3dAS%26pq%3dyoutube%2bhail%2bthee%2bfestival%26sk%3dPRES1%26sc%3d1%26%26cvid%3dda5ad4d00d174e848d6eb5c6316af829

May this music enrichen your pandemic Easter celebration! I long for the time when we'll all once again be together in Ascension's sanctuary raising our voices in praise to God.

*Rise heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise without delays,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise with him may'st rise;
That, as his death calcined thee to dust his life may make thee gold, and much more, just.
Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part with all thy art
The cross taught all wood to resound his name who bore the same
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key is best to celebrate this most high day
Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song pleasant and long:
Or since all music is but three parts vied and multiplied:
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part and make up our defects with his sweet art.
~ George Herbert*



Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

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

APRIL 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Don't forget to check out our website at www.ascension-sierramadre.com for all of the latest information on our worship, prayer, and Christian Ed opportunities during the coronavirus safer at home county ordinance. Thank You to Maggie Outhouse for all of her work in keeping the website updated with all of the changes.</p> <p>Thank You Maggie!</p> 			<p>1</p> <p>Lenten Class-The Epistle of James Continues 7pm ZOOM CALL</p> <p>Evening Prayer 5:45pm Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>2</p> <p>9am Forum Zoom Call</p> <p>10:15am Staff Mtg Zoom Call</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Lenten Prayer & Devotional Study Continues 6:45pm Zoom Call</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5</p> <p>PALM SUNDAY</p> <p>Sunday Worship Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p> <p>Virtual Coffee Hour Zoom Call</p> <p>Between the Masses Discussion Group Zoom Call</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Morning Prayer 9am Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Evening Prayer 5:45pm Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p> <p>Tenebrae Mass 7pm Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>9</p> <p>9am Forum Zoom Call</p> <p>Watch at the Altar of Repose 7pm Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Stations of the Cross Noon Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p> <p>Good Friday Liturgy 7pm Facebook live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12</p> <p>EASTER SUNDAY</p> <p>Sunday Worship Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p> <p>Virtual Coffee Hour Zoom Call</p> <p>Between the Masses Discussion Group Zoom Call</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Morning Prayer 9am Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Evening Prayer 5:45pm Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>16</p> <p>9am Forum Zoom Call</p> <p>10:15am Staff Mtg Zoom Call</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Lenten Prayer & Devotional Study Continues 6:45pm Zoom Call</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19</p> <p>Sunday Worship Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p> <p>Virtual Coffee Hour Zoom Call</p> <p>Between the Masses Discussion Group Zoom Call</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Morning Prayer 9am Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Vestry Meeting 7:30pm Zoom Call</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Evening Prayer 5:45pm Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>23</p> <p>9am Forum Zoom Call</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Lenten Prayer & Devotional Study Continues 6:45pm Zoom Call</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26</p> <p>Sunday Worship Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p> <p>Virtual Coffee Hour Zoom Call</p> <p>Between the Masses Discussion Group Zoom Call</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Morning Prayer 9am Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Evening Prayer 5:45pm Facebook Live & Zoom Call</p>	<p>30</p> <p>9am Forum Zoom Call</p>		

Spire Creator: Kim Lumino, Parish Administrator