

The April 2025 SPIRE

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



Upcoming Events

Please see the calendar on page 8 for an updated list of events.



"Here's a unique way to support our parish! If you have a car, truck, boat or other vehicle that's become a nuisance, you can now donate that vehicle to Ascension. You'll be able to write the value of the vehicle off as a tax deduction and Ascension will benefit from the proceeds of its sale. Simply call **855-500-RIDE** or visit

<http://www.careasy.org/nonprofit/the-episcopal-church-of-the-ascension>

to schedule a free pickup. All you need is the vehicle's title-- the CARS service will handle the rest."

CARS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

based out of San Diego, California.

From the Rector

Five years ago, we were already in the midst of a crisis of which none of us could know the scale. We "shut down" in March of 2020. At the time, I naively hoped that we could be back to "normal" by Pentecost. Enduring the pandemic took so much out of all of us. And by now, almost all of us have had COVID, sometimes more than once.

Responding to all that has happened since this January, many of us are approaching Easter 2025 with a sense of exhaustion and, at the same time, with a sense of hope.

Our congregation has weathered the fire better than many. While all of us know someone who lost everything – home, job, school, church, business, and community – our folks are all accounted for and housed.

As we come towards Easter this year, may our message be one of Resurrection and renewal. Looking at the mountains, I already see green grass sprouting up and I am reminded of this hymn verse – "Now the green blade riseth from the buried grain, wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain: Love lives again, that with the dead has been: Love is come again like wheat that springeth green."

Blessings,
MAB+

Holy Week, Easter Services

Palm Sunday April 13

Mass (Rite I) 8:00 AM
Mass (Rite II) 10:15 AM

Tenebrae April 16

Mass 7:00 PM

Maundy Thursday April 17

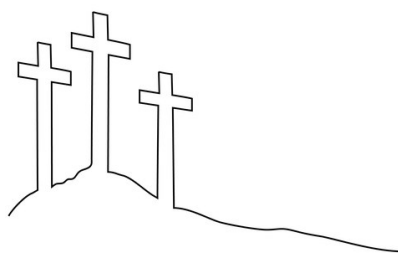
Mass 8:15 AM
Foot Washing and Mass 7:00 PM
Watch at Altar of Repose 9 PM –10:30 PM

Good Friday April 18

Stations of the Cross Noon
Good Friday Liturgy 7:00 PM

Easter Day April 20

The Great Vigil and
1st Eucharist of Easter 6:00 AM
Easter Brunch 8:00 AM
Easter Egg Hunt 9:55 AM
Festival High Mass 10:15 AM



MARCH 2025 Pledge Payment Snapshot



2025 Budget \$205,150

YTD Budget: \$51,287
YTD Actual: \$62,688
Difference: \$+11,401



As we continue to explore trauma and Trauma Informed Care (TIC), it's important to remember that trauma affects us all and comes in many forms. Emotional and psychological trauma doesn't discriminate. It affects everyone regardless of age, race, ethnicity, or social-economic status. It can be a single event or a series of events. It goes without saying that anxiety seems to be coating every aspect of our lives.

When traumatic events occur, it can take a significant amount of time to get over the memories and emotions of not being able to feel safe. Working through the effects of trauma sometimes requires professional help.

A traumatic event can "take our breath away" and leave us feeling numb, distressed, and disconnected. An important part of healing is to repair this sense of separateness from others and from within ourselves.

Trauma also affects us spiritually. How can we regain our "spirituality" and our deep connection to all of life in difficult times? During this holy season, this time in the desert places of our lives, what better time to repair, restore, and improve our malnourished souls and journey toward renewed resurrection and improved relationships with God, ourselves, our neighbors, community, country, and our planet.

The world's wisdom traditions have developed many ways to mend the separation that occurs in every human life when we face the inescapable reality of suffering. Great religious and secular thinkers have taught us through the ages how to build human community. The original meaning of religion was "to gather and bind" into community. Even though our religious heritage may have compromised their teachings, the original intention to support our search for purpose and meaning remains true.

All genuine spiritual practices, including humanistic ones, have some variation of the "golden rule" to create for others the kind of world we would want for ourselves. This attitude may be extended not only to other people but to all of life. How to live this ideal is up to us to explore. One size does not fit all. The day-to-day application of this practice of upholding the welfare of every being will vary from person to person and from culture to culture, but the fundamentals are the same whenever we look deeply into each spiritual path.

May you be encouraged to find how to express your own spirituality by exploring your religious beliefs to find an expression that fits who you are now. Begin with the firm knowledge that you are worthy of this quest. Your every breath is proof that you are already woven into the web of life.

Remember:

"Things take the time they take. Don't worry." – Mary Oliver

"Have patience with all things, but, first with yourself." – Saint Francis De Sales

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience" Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Be well, be blessed, be patient.

Deacon Ed+



EASTER SUNDAY CONTINENTAL BRUNCH

Let's meet up in Hawks Hall following the early morning Service to celebrate Easter. This year's brunch will be on the lighter side, a Continental Potluck. The sign-up sheet for the potluck will be posted on the bulletin board. Please be sure your dish serves 8 - 10, disposable aluminum pans preferred.

There will only be one brunch in between the two Services, but what is leftover will be put out following the later service. The sign-up sheet will also include sign-ups requesting helping setting up the brunch and for clean up.

Respectfully,
Lisa Wagner, Hospitality Hostess

Bring Bells on Easter Day!

Easter is a time for joyous bell ringing. Once again, I encourage everyone to bring bells - bells of all sorts and sizes - to the Easter Day services. We ring them during the first singing of the Gloria in excelsis and with gusto during the singing of the hymn "Jesus Christ is Risen Today."

During Eastertide, instead of ringing the Angelus on the large bell at the conclusion of the service, we will ring the Regina Coeli. This joyful devotion dates from the 12th century and invites us to rejoice with Mary at the Resurrection. The text is -

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
The Son whom you merited to bear, alleluia.
Has risen, as He said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.
V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ gave rejoicing to the world, grant, we pray, that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joy of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The bell will ring four sets of two strokes, with pauses between each set, followed by eight peals. As in most things, this devotion is only one option in the broad spectrum of personal piety.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, I pray that your Lent has been a time of renewal and growth.

MAB+



HOSPITALITY FUNDRAISER

*Drawing will be held on Easter Sunday,
following the 1st Service.*

Hospitality will be selling raffle tickets beginning, Sunday, April 6, 2025. There are two items that are See's Candies. Please step into Hawks Hall on the two Sundays, prior to Easter any time after the 8am Service and, of course, on Easter Sunday. (*Winners of the raffle need not be present.*)

See's Candies have been donated; therefore 100% of this fundraiser will enrich our Hospitality fund.

Tickets:
\$5.00 each
Or
3 for \$10.00

Please help to support our Hospitality Fund!

Thank you,
Lisa Wagner
Hospitality Hostess

First to be raffled the Assorted Eggs



(Retail value: \$11.00)

Second to be raffled, the Egg Tin of Chocolates



(Retail value: \$21.00)

Altar Flowers and Sanctuary Candles

We would like to remind everyone that you can now sign-up for altar flowers and sanctuary candles online through Signup Genius. You can also sign-up on the sign-up sheets in Hawks Hall.

****Payment should be made by CHECK (\$50.00 for flowers and \$15.00 for a candle) payable to Church of the Ascension.**** Please include a note giving the date that you signed up for and any dedication.

Here are the sign-up genius links:

Sanctuary Candles:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D4CA8A623A3FE3-54223863-sanctuary>

Altar Flowers:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0D4CA8A623A3FE3-54223716-flowers>



MEN'S GROUP LUNCHEON

Wednesday, April 2nd

Nano Café @ Noon

RSVP to Fr. Michael



EASTER MUSIC

Please consider making a contribution to our Easter music program. Music offering envelopes are available at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

Thank You for your support.

EASTER FLOWERS

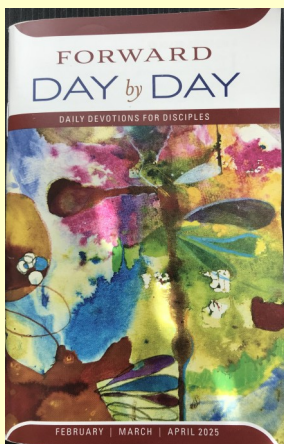


As the end of Lent draws near, we start looking forward to Holy Week and the joyous season of Easter. In Altar Guild, we eagerly await transforming our beloved sanctuary to an outward sign of our inner joy for Easter Sunday.

In order to accomplish this transformation, we need your generous monetary donations now for the flowers we will purchase and arrange for Easter Sunday. Envelopes for flower donations are available at the back of the church and in the hallway to Hawks Hall. Checks should be made out to Church of the Ascension with Easter Flowers on the memo line.

St. Anne's Altar Guild thanks you in advance for your continued support of our ministry.

Lynne P Holl, Altar Guild Directress



Pick up a copy of the new Forward Movement Day by Day booklet. Copies can be found at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

A \$2 donation is appreciated.
Thank You!

Lenten Episcopal Relief & Development Offering

This year we will be collecting funds for the Wildfire Relief Fund instead of our usual Goat Drive. If donating by check, please put Wildfire Relief Fund on the memo line.

EDLA Bishop Coadjutor Search 2025

The Bishop Search Committee is listening. Come and Share your Voice!

The committee's 1st goal is to hear from people of the Diocese. Your input is an important part of the search process so we invite you to participate in a series of listening sessions that will be held over the next few weeks. There will be In-person Sessions as well as Zoom Sessions. Questions should be directed to Deacon Ed. See below for further information

In-Person Listening Sessions

March 22nd Deanery 3 - Holy Faith, Inglewood, 10 AM

March 22nd Deanery 4 - St. Mark's, Glendale, 10 AM

March 29th Deanery 9 - Trinity, Orange, 10 AM

March 29th Deanery 10 - St. Wilfrid's, Huntington Beach, 10 AM

April 5th Deanery 1- St. Paul's, Ventura 10 AM

April 5th Deanery 7 - Trinity, Redlands, 10 AM

April 12th Deanery 2- St. Stephen's, Santa Clarita, 10 AM

April 12th Deanery 8 - St. Cross, Hermosa Beach, 10 AM

April 26th Deanery 5- Our Saviour, San Gabriel, 10 AM

April 26th Deanery 6 - Holy Trinity, Covina, 10 AM

Virtual Listening Sessions via Zoom

March 27th (Thursday)@ 6 pm - AM/AAPI

April 1st (Tuesday)@ 2 pm - Diocesan Staff

April 1st (Tuesday) @ 6 pm - Latino

April 3rd (Thursday) @ 6 pm - Laity

April 7th (Monday) @ 7 pm - LGBTQ+

April 8th (Tuesday) @ 6 pm - Episcopalians of African descent

April 10th (Saturday) @ 6 pm - Latino

April 22nd (Tuesday)@ 6 pm - Laity

April 24th (Thursday)@ 2 pm - Clergy/Priests

April 24th (Thursday) @ 6 pm - Deacons

April 27th (Sunday)@ 2 pm - Youth



Forward Today: Fearless faith

May 1, 2024 [Forward Today](#), [scott gunn](#)

Dear friends in Christ,

Last weekend, I visited the Diocese of Northern California to speak about evangelism at their revival, Fearless Faith. The name of the revival got me thinking.

Fearless faith could suggest that we practice our faith without fear. It's tempting to find ourselves limiting how we practice our faith, as individuals or congregations, out of fear. We might worry about money, or what people will think of us, or whether some new ministry will succeed or fail.

What if we practiced our faith boldly? There's no reason not to invite people to our churches. There's often more money available than we think. Even if some new ministry doesn't take off, we will learn something—so there's rarely a total failure. Fearless faith is closer to the adventure that the Gospels suggest when we choose to follow Jesus.



Rooted and Growing Evangelism workshop at the Fearless Faith Revival. (Photo: [The Episcopal Diocese of Northern California on Facebook](#))

But there's another way to read that title, Fearless Faith. As we just heard last Sunday in the epistle, perfect love casts out fear. Our culture is bombarded by messages peddling fear. "Be afraid of those people." "Be afraid of that place." "Be afraid that you might not have enough money." "Be afraid that your appearance is not sufficiently beautiful." It's nonsense, and it's antithetical to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In faith, we will realize we don't need to be afraid of anyone or any place. We will realize there is enough. We will realize that we don't need to "look more beautiful" because we are all made in the image and likeness of God, and nothing could be more beautiful than that!

So if we fill our hearts in faith with the love of Jesus Christ, we will immunize ourselves against the bombardment of fear.

I am always working on practicing and believing a fearless faith. I hope you are, too. Be not afraid!

Yours faithfully,

Scott Gunn
Executive Director

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 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	2 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal Men's Group Luncheon Nano Café Noon—RSVP to Fr. Michael	3 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	4	5
6 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	7 8:15am- 9:45AM Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group	8 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	9 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal	10 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	11	12 Baby Shower/Castillo Family/Time TBD/Hall
13 PALM SUNDAY 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	14 8:15am- 9:45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	15 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets 7pm Vestry Meeting/Hall	16 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal	17 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	18	19
HOLY WEEK SERVICE DATES & TIMES ARE NOTED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE NEWSLETTER						
20  SEE 1ST PAGE FOR THE WORSHIP AND BRUNCH SCHEDULE.	21 8:30am Yoga/Hall	22 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	23 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal	24 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	25	26 Music Recital/ 2-5pm/Hall/ Private
27 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	28 8:15am- 9:45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	29 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	30 8:15am-9am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal			