

The SPIRE

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



February 2018

Upcoming Events

February 4th – Commissioning of Vestry
at both services

February 10th – 9am-2:30pm/Hall
Vestry Orientation Workday

February 11th – Noon/Library
Parish Ministry Council Meeting

February 13th – 5:30pm-7pm/Hall
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

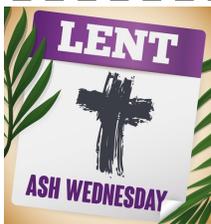
From the Rector On Saturday, January 13th, I was awakened early by a call from my friend and colleague – Father Bob Gaestel. He said ‘We’ve had a fire – can you get here quick?’ I quickly got dressed and drove over to the Church of the Angels in Pasadena. Bob and I have both served at Ernest Coxhead designed churches for over thirty years. I dreaded what I would find on arrival. As it turned out, the damage was quite different than what I had anticipated.

What happened was that a vandal had painted strange things on various things, attempted to destroy the pulpit, and started a fire in the nave. The baptismal font was overturned, and an iconic statue of an angel outside had been defaced and damaged. Fortunately, two guys were out walking by the church (a little after 2am), and they saw the fire and called it in. They showed up later on Saturday afternoon when the cleanup party was going on and again at the Sunday service. But it all was very unsettling. Clearly someone was very disturbed to have committed this act.



As the investigation proceeded, it was apparent that the individual had committed similar crimes at other churches. Most recently, the Roman Catholic Church of the Resurrection in Boyle Heights was struck on Thursday, January 25th. They suffered extensive, but repairable, fire damage. By then, the Houses of Worship Task Force (a cooperative of federal and local agencies) was on the case; and on Friday the 26th, they apprehended the individual in the act of starting yet another fire. It is reassuring to know that this troubled man is in custody.

All in all, there are a couple of “takeaways.” Both Church of the Angels and Resurrection understood the necessity of holding worship right away. Resilient churches aren’t dependent on a building to be the Church. Second, we need our neighbors as much as they need us. If it hadn’t been for alert neighbors, both churches might have been totally destroyed. Finally, while it is tempting to hold very vindictive thoughts about the culprit, he too deserves our prayers. He’s clearly a sick young man. *Blessings, Father Michael*



February 14th

Mass & Imposition of Ashes
7am, Noon, & 6pm

February 18th – Covering Clergy/
The Rev’d Jerome Kahler

February 19th – President’s Day
Parish Office Closed

February 23rd— 6:30pm/Chapel & Hall
Lenten Prayer & Dinner

February 25th— Guest Speaker
The Ven. Russell Oechel/ER&D



Pledge Payment
Snapshot

January 2018

Budget Amount: \$211,001

YTD Budget: YTD Actual:
\$17,583 \$33,535

Difference:
\$+15,952

(includes \$13,550 in
prepaid 2018 pledges)

SAVE THE DATE! FEBRUARY 13th, 2018

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Come have your fair share of Pancakes for Supper!

Time: 5:30 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 or more!**



All proceeds will be donated to Friends in Deed.

2018 Vestry Members

Officers:

Rector/CEO	The Very Reverend Canon Michael Bamberger
Senior Warden	Jean Rowe
Junior Warden	Gordon Tomaske
Clerk of the Vestry	Bill Voegeli
Treasurer (<i>Budget, Investment</i>)	Mark Keith
Verger (<i>Archives, Buildings and Grounds</i>)	Mike Beach

Term of Office

<u>2018 Term</u>	<u>2019 Term</u>	<u>2020 Term</u>
Mark Keith Bill Voegeli Jean Rowe	Natalie Dougall Dan Hanson Gordon Tomaske	Tim Hayden Marie Prentice John Buchanan



Fr. Bamberger

Dan Hanson

Natalie Dougall

Gordon Tomaske

Marie Prentice

Tim Hayden

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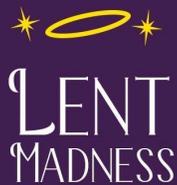
Mark Keith

Bill Voegeli

Jean Rowe

Please extend a well done congratulations to our retiring Vestry members **Meg Cox**, **Jessica Meehan** and **Carol Rasmussen**. We are grateful to Meg Cox for her heroic efforts to determine the right to show the film The Fog, for her help on the Marketing Committee, for co-chairing the creation of the contact questionnaire, and for her great follow through, to Jessica Meehan for heading the 2015 Stewardship Campaign, for co-chairing the contact questionnaire, and for her help on the Marketing Committee, and to Carol Rasmussen for faithfully serving as Clerk of the Vestry for the past three years, for her help in researching projects, and in selecting the website. What a blessing they have been!





Lent Madness 2018

The Sainly Smackdown is Back!

By now you've heard that Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day coincide this year. The real Lenten *love*, however, kicks off the next day on February 15. Why? Because for the ninth year running, people of faith are gearing up for Lent Madness, the beloved "sainly smackdown!"

With its unique blend of competition, learning, and humor, Lent Madness allows participants to be inspired by the ways in which God has worked through the lives of saintly souls across generations and cultures. Throughout Lent, thirty-two saints will do battle to win the coveted Golden Halo. Based loosely on the NCAA basketball tournament of a similar name, this online devotion pits saints against one another in a bracket as voters choose their favorites throughout this penitential season.

Here's how to participate: on the weekdays of Lent, information is posted at <http://www.lentmadness.org> about two different saints. Each pairing remains open for 24 hours as participants read about and then vote to determine which saint moves on to the next round. Sixteen saints make it to the Round of the Sainly Sixteen; eight advance to the Round of the Elate Eight; four make it to the Faithful Four; two to the Championship; and the winner is awarded the coveted Golden Halo.

The first round consists of basic biographical information about each of the 32 saints. Things get a bit more interesting in the subsequent rounds as we offer quotes and quirks, explore legends, and even move into the area of saintly kitsch.

This year Lent Madness features an intriguing slate of saints ancient and modern, Biblical and ecclesiastical. 2018 heavyweights include John the Evangelist, Margaret of Scotland, Richard Hooker, Katharina von Bora, and the apostles Peter and Paul.

The full bracket is online at the Lent Madness website <http://www.lentmadness.org> and, while not necessary to participate, you can order *The Sainly Scorecard: The Definitive Guide to Lent Madness 2018* at <http://www.forwardmovement.org>. This companion guide includes biographies of all 32 saints, a full-color bracket, information about how to fully participate, and a series of Pocket Lent trading cards.

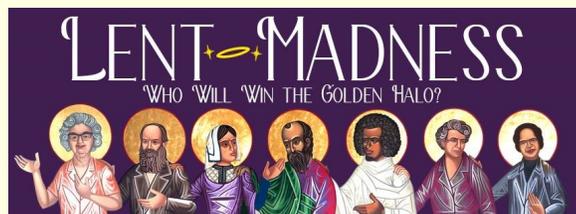
Lent Madness began in 2010 as the brainchild of the Rev. Tim Schenck, an Episcopal priest and rector of St. John's Church in Hingham, Massachusetts. In seeking a fun, engaging way for people to learn about the men and women who make up the church's calendar of saints, Schenck devised this devotion. Combining his love of sports with his passion for the lives of the saints, Lent Madness was born.

Starting in 2012, Schenck partnered with Forward Movement (the same folks that publish *Forward Day by Day*) executive director Scott Gunn, to bring Lent Madness to the masses. Schenck and Gunn form the self-appointed Supreme Executive Committee, a more-or-less benevolent dictatorship that runs the entire operation.

The formula has worked as this online devotional has been featured in media outlets all over the country including national television, the Washington Post, NPR, USA Today, and even Sports Illustrated (seriously). More importantly thousands of people have been inspired by the saintly stories of those who have come before us in the faith.

Eleven "celebrity bloggers" from across the country have been tapped to write for the project: the Rev. Amber Belldene of San Francisco, CA; the Rev. Laurie Brock of Lexington, KY; the Rev. Megan Castellana of Kansas City, MO; Anna Fitch Courie of Honolulu, HI; Dr. David Creech of Morehead, MN; Neva Rae Fox of Somerville, NJ; the Rev. David Hansen of Woodlands, TX; Emily Miller of Chicago, IL; Carol Howard Merritt of Chattanooga, TN; The Rev. Marcus Halley of Minneapolis, MN; and the Rev. David Sibley of Manhasset, NY. Information about each of the celebrity bloggers and the rest of the team is available on the Lent Madness website.

If you're looking for a Lenten discipline that is fun, educational, occasionally goofy, and always joyful, join the Lent Madness journey. Lent needn't be all doom and gloom. After all, what could be more joyful than a season specifically set aside to get closer to Jesus Christ?



<http://www.lentmadness.org/2018/01/free-lent-madness-article-3/>

The 2017 Vestry wishes to thank you all for pledging, for saving us money by volunteering, for praying, and for believing that somehow we could restore the cuts to the 2018 budget. With your help and the grace of God, we are ending the 2017 year in the black and entering 2018 with a modest deficit of \$3,330. For more details, see the financial section of the Annual Report.

The Annual Meeting does not just happen. Many people are involved who deserve our thanks. In particular

Thank you to those who created the Annual Report:

- Those who wrote reports: Father Michael, Deacon Ed, Jobi Harrell, Gordon Tomaske, Scott Callihan, Maggie Outhouse, Nicole Hanson, Mike Beach, Kathy Calleton, Carolyn Johnson and Mark Keith
- Father Michael for putting the report together

Thank you to those who organized and set up the meeting:

- Jobi Harrell for creating the slide show
- Jose for setting up the tables and chairs
- Mother Robin, Jobi Harrell, the week's Altar Guild team for decorating the tables and setting up the plates and cups
- Kim Lumino for preparing the materials for the meeting and a whole lot of behind the scenes work

Thank you to those who organized the potluck and made it such a delicious success

- Nicole Hanson for making the distribution of food seem so easy
- Maggie Outhouse for being in charge of clean up
- Everyone who brought food for the potluck
- Everyone who helped set up and clean up

Thank you to Carol Rasmussen for taking minutes of the meeting

Thank you to Gordon Tomaske for doing double duty giving both the Junior Warden and the Treasurer's Reports.

And a special thank you for Father Michael who besides fulfilling the official Annual Meeting duties as our Rector also lit the oven when the rest of us were unsuccessful, set up the slide show, and ran what I think you will agree was a very successful Annual Meeting.

Many thanks to all.

thank you

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

The first two Sundays of February continue our Epiphany worship and transition into Lent ~

February 4 – Epiphany 4

K. Lee Scott's *Have You Not Known?* and a moving setting of *There Is A Balm* by Bruce Saylor;

February 11 – the Last Sunday of Epiphany

Christ Upon the Mountaintop by Robert Lehmann, one of my favorite contemporary composers; during communion, *Alleluia, Song of Gladness* by Richard Shepherd, which begins and ends with a beautiful chant, leading us into Lent;

February 18 – Lent 1

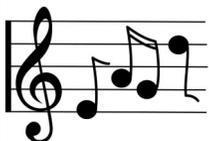
John Goss' poignant *O Savior of the World* coupled with the lovely Edward Elgar's *Ave Verum Corpus*;

February 25 – Lent 2

Hide Not Thy Face by Richard Farrant and Samuel Webbe's *Lamb of God*.

Our Lenten music is deliberately contemplative with a certain mystique – designed to assist our meditation and spiritual devotion, with the ultimate goal of bringing us to the Resurrection.

*You manifested humility, O Christ, as the way of genuine nobility
by emptying Yourself and taking the form of a slave.
You did not hear the self-praising prayers of the Pharisee,
but you received the broken sighs of the publican as a blameless sacrifice.
Therefore I cry out to you:
"Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, and save me, O Savior."
~ from Thomas Hopko, *The Lenten Spring**



Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

Congratulations to Mother Robin Kassabian on her ordination to the priesthood on January 13th, 2018. On January 14th, she celebrated for the first time here at Ascension. We will miss her presence at Ascension very much as she departs as Priest-in-charge at St. Mark's Van Nuys.



REAL
LIFE. Real
Faith.

How I spent my Lent – Part I.

I can't help but wonder if I am truly living my life fully and as God intends. Sometimes I think I've got it all figured out; and at other times (most of the time), I'm pretty clueless. I do know this, however, that if I'm even going to get close to figuring it out, I need to slow down and examine my life and relationship with the Awesome One who some of us call God. What better time to start then now – Lent.

I invite you to join me on a five-week journey of self-discovery. We begin on Ash Wednesday through the first Saturday in Lent (February 14-17) contemplating the poem *"No One Lives His Life"* by Ranier Maria Rilke:

*Disguised since childhood,
haphazardly assembled
from voices and fears and little pleasures,
We come of age as masks.*

*Our true face never speaks.
Somewhere there must be storehouses
where all these lives are laid away
like suits of armour or old carriages
or cloths hanging limply on the walls.*

*Maybe all paths lead here,
to the repository of un-lived things.*

Each week we will meditate on a few simple questions based on Sunday's gospel. How easy is that; all you have to do is think.

First week of Lent: Mark 1:9-15

- ~ Do I sometimes feel cast out and alone?
- ~ For what sweet deal am I secretly hoping?
- ~ What comforts me and what am I confronting?

Second week of Lent: Mark 8:31-38

- ~ What do I struggle to hear Jesus say?
- ~ Have I ever felt 'rebuked' by God?
- ~ When do I find it hard to listen all the way?

In Part II, we will continue with the remaining Sundays leading up to Palm Sunday. Live well, live blessed, live informed. **Deacon Ed+**

IT'S TRADITION! SHROVE TUESDAY

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 English, 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.

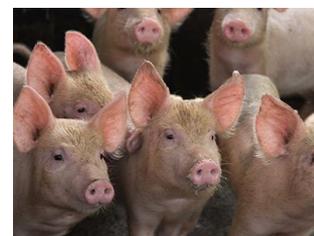
So now that you know the history, plan on joining us [February 13](#) for Ascension's own interpretation of this old Anglican custom. It's Tradition!



Oink... Oink... The pigs are coming!

Our Lenten Outreach project will be PIGS with Episcopal Relief & Development. Each donated pig includes training on raising and selling pigs and gives families a better future fast. Pigs reproduce quickly, and piglets are ready for market in just six months. Look for the pig in the back of the church during Lent, and ***please turn in your contributions by Palm Sunday 3/25.***

Scott Callihan, Outreach Ministry Leader



When Ash Wednesday comes on Valentine's Day, do you give up chocolates?

Over the last couple of years, Lenten discipline information has shifted from giving up to doing something. That something can be doing something for the poor – volunteering at a food distribution center, finally going through your closets and taking used clothing to Good Will or the Salvation Army. You can do something to improve your health by finally starting that exercise program or by joining a walking group. You can reach out to others by calling that friend you haven't made contact with for months, visiting a senior who is at a care facility, helping a neighbor with a chore that takes two or more, writing that note you keep wanting to send.

I have a couple of Ascension Lenten Do suggestions for you.

You can start by coming to the annual Shrove Tuesday Supper (5:30-7:00 on February 13th), attending one of the three Ash Wednesday services (7:00 am, noon, 6:00 pm on February 14th) and attending one or more of our Friday Devotional Service and Dinner with Pastor Josh on February 23, March 9, and March 23.

You can contribute to this year's Episcopal Relief & Development Lent Pig Drive; you can volunteer to be an usher, to join altar guild, to sponsor a coffee hour, to help with clean up after services, to join the choir, to join one of the adult small groups. You can come to Tuesday Morning Prayer group, or 7:00 am Mass on Wednesday mornings. You can welcome any newcomers and encourage them to join you at coffee hour. You can volunteer your home for house church. I could go on, but you probably know better than I the Ascension task that could be your Lenten Do.

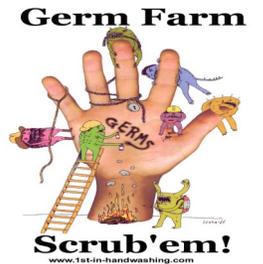


So you see, you don't necessarily have to give up those sweets from your Valentine. Instead, find something you can do to make a difference this Lent. ***Jean Rowe, Senior Warden***



AND WHERE HAVE YOUR HANDS BEEN TODAY?

MRSA Colds diarrhea Bacteria
Cooties FIU



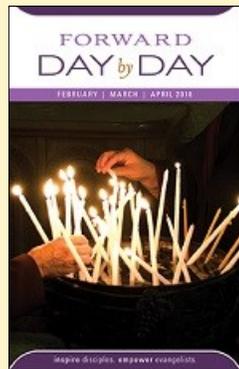
Hand-washing is an easy, inexpensive and effective way to prevent the spread of germs and keep people healthy.

IF YOUR HANDS ARE VISIBLY DIRTY, WASH YOUR HANDS USING SOAP AND WATER.

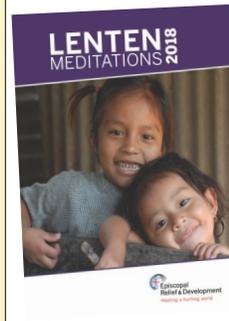
Look for our 3 Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizer Dispensers. Just for You (and for All of Us)!

- Hallway wall by the bathrooms
- Wall just inside kitchen door next to the library
- Stand across from the office in Hawks Hall

Ascension has your spiritual back
And your beautiful, amazing microbe-inhabited hands.. **Respectfully Submitted, Maggie Byrne**



The new **Forward Movement Day by Day** booklets are available at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall. *A \$2 donation is requested.*



2018 LENTEN MEDITATIONS
Episcopal Relief & Development

The booklets are available at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

Ordination into Priesthood
January 13, 2018
St. John's Pro-Cathedral
Mark Bradshaw and Robin Kassabian
Photos by Maggie Outhouse



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 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 7am Mass 8:45-9:30 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 9:45am Gooden Chapel/Sanctuary 10:30-11 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 10:30am Staff Mtg	2	3
4 <div style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Vestry Commissioning- Both Services</div> 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass 2pm EFM Mtg/Library	5 <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Fr. Bamberger Out of Office/Clergy Support Group</div> 9:45am Gooden Chapel/Sanctuary	6 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group <div style="background-color: green; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Private Daisy Troop Meeting 4:30-6pm Hall</div>	7 10:30-11:45 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 3:00 Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 5:30pm Yoga/Hall 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal/Hall	8 7am Mass 8:45-9:30 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 9am Forum 9:45am Gooden Chapel/Sanctuary 10:30-11 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall	9 <div style="background-color: green; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Private Spiritual Direction 10:30am Rectors Office</div>	10 9am-2:30pm Vestry Orientation Workday Hawks Hall
11 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass Noon-PMC Mtg/Library 2pm EFM Mtg/Library	12 9:45am Gooden Chapel/Sanctuary <div style="background-color: green; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) in Hawks Hall 6:30pm-9:30pm</div>	13 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">5:30pm-7pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper Hawks Hall</div>	14 <div style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE TIMES 7am, Noon, 6pm</div> 8am Gooden Chapel 10:30-11:45 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 3:00 Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 3:30-5pm Village Voices/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal/Hall	15 7am Mass 8:45-9:30 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 9am Forum 9:45am Gooden Chapel/Sanctuary 10:30-11 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 10:30am Staff Mtg	16	17
18 <div style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Covering Clergy- The Rev'd Jerome Kahler</div> <div style="background-color: purple; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Pastor Josh/Youth Minister Vacation Day</div> 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass 2pm EFM Mtg/Library	19  <div style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Parish Office Closed</div>	20 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	21 10:30-11:45 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 3:00 Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 3:30-5pm Village Voices/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal/Hall	22 7am Mass 8:45-9:30 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 9am Forum 9:45am Gooden Chapel/Sanctuary 10:30-11 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall	23 <div style="background-color: green; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Private Spiritual Direction 1:00pm-2:30pm Library</div> <div style="background-color: blue; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Lenten Prayer/Dinner 6:30pm Chapel/Hawks Hall</div>	24
Fr. Bamberger Out of Office—GOE's NC						
25 <div style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Guest Speaker-The Ven. Russell Oechsel/ER&D</div> 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass 2pm EFM Mtg/Library	26 9:45am Gooden Chapel/Sanctuary <div style="background-color: green; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) in Hawks Hall 6:30pm-9:30pm</div> <div style="background-color: red; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">MARCH NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE</div>	27 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	28 10:30-11:45 Gooden K-1 Music/Hall 3:00 Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 3:30-5pm Village Voices/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal/Hall			