

The SPIRE 2020

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



FEBRUARY

Upcoming Events

February 2nd - Vestry Commissioning
@ both services

February 11th - Vestry Meeting
7:30pm/Hawks Hall

February 19th - House Church/Dinner
6:30pm/Meehan Family Home

February 17th - President's Day
Parish Office Closed!

February 23rd - Noon/Library
Parish Ministry Council Meeting

February 25th -
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

From the Rector

I am incredibly grateful for the weeks ahead.

I go to North Carolina in a couple of weeks to join with colleagues from around the national church to work at certifying the proficiency of those seeking to be ordained this year. Since there is a huge variety of ways that people are arriving at a theological education, the standards of expectation are very much in flux. In addition, the cost of offering a national examination is a factor for the whole Episcopal Church. Many dioceses have opted out of using the General Ordination Examination and are using locally created substitutes. Because priests are ordained for the whole Church and not simply for a particular congregation or diocese and because the teaching ministry of priesthood is so intrinsic to it, I believe there should be a "gold standard" to determine proficiency. There are big questions looming about this process, and I am proud to serve on the national General Board of Examining Chaplains.

On Shrove Tuesday, I will get the privilege of flipping pancakes, and burning palms. I am looking forward to sharing this festive occasion with Gooden School families. Some of you may recall that it was our custom for many years to have pancakes together.

And on Ash Wednesday, I will impose ashes in what is one of the most solemn moments of our life together. Lent, while penitential, is a deeper season for all of us. I find a different kind of joy in this season of self-reflection and restraint.

None of these activities would be possible without the community that is our parish family - the Church of the Ascension. For all that I am blessed with, I give thanks to God.

Blessings, MAB+



February 26th

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



Dear Ascension Friends -

It is with the utmost appreciation that we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts for your kind response upon hearing of my accidental fall resulting in a broken right hip. Under the guidance of Nicole Hanson - thank you Nicole - Ross enjoyed a delicious daily dinner while I was in hospital and rehab. Four weeks later, I am home now and recovering very well. The friendship and fellowship you gave both us will always be remembered.

God Bless You All ! Most sincerely, Beth Smith-Kellock and Ross Kellock

January 2020

Pledge Payment Snapshot



2020 Budget \$221,000

YTD Budget: \$18,417

YTD Actual: \$17,906

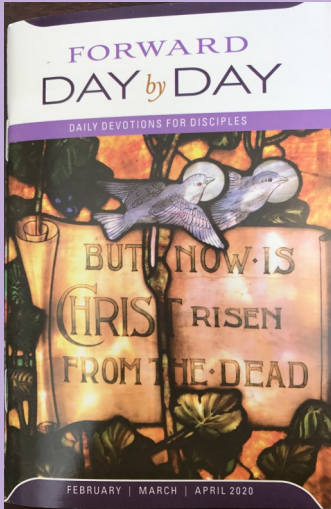
Difference: \$-511.00

House Church & Dinner Wednesday, February 19th @ 6:30pm

Join us for House Church and Dinner on February 19th at 6:30pm at the Meehan family home. The sign-up sheet is on the Events Table in Hawks Hall.

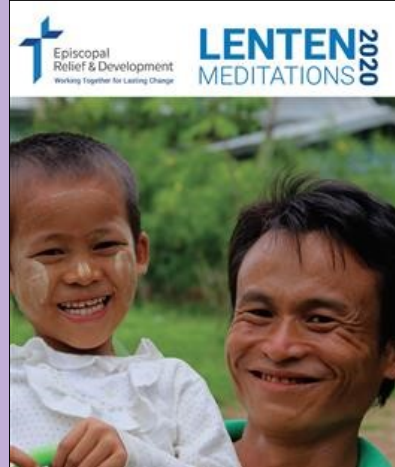
Please contact the church office if you need the address.





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 requested.



Coming Soon...

Be on the look out for Lenten Meditations 2020 by Episcopal Relief & Development. Copies will be available soon on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

2020 Vestry Members

Officers:

Rector/CEO	The Very Reverend Canon Michael Bamberger
Senior Warden	John Buchanan
Junior Warden	Ray Smith
Clerk of the Vestry	Charley Noecker
Treasurer (<i>Budget, Investment</i>)	Dan Hanson
Verger (<i>Archives, Buildings and Grounds</i>)	Mike Beach

Term of Office

<u>2020 Term</u>	<u>2021 Term</u>	<u>2022 Term</u>
Brian Williams	Ray Smith	Dan Hanson
Marie Prentice	Charley Noecker	Matt Gorman
John Buchanan	Maggie Outhouse	Connie Keith



Fr. Bamberger

Dan Hanson

Brian Williams

Connie Keith

Marie Prentice

Matt Gorman

John Buchanan

Maggie Outhouse

Ray Smith

Charley Noecker

SAVE THE DATE!

Tuesday, February 25th, 2020

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!

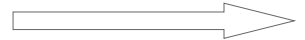


All proceeds will be donated to Friends in Deed.



And you thought there was nothing to do during Lent!

Check out the next 2 pages for even more details on the upcoming events!



Start the Season with Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on February 26 from 5:30-7:00.

Attend

- An Ash Wednesday Service at 7:00 am, Noon, and 6:00 pm.
- Tuesday morning Stations of the Cross and meditation in the chapel at 10:00 beginning March 3 and continuing through April 7.
- Friday Lenten Supper and Discussion with Pastor Josh at 6:00 beginning on March 6 and continuing through April 3
- Lenten class/bible study on The Epistle of James on Wednesday evenings between Ash Wednesday and Holy Week.

Donate to ER&D Goat Drive

Our Lenten Outreach project will be GOATS with Episcopal Relief & Development. Each donated goat will help train families and community groups in developing countries to produce staple items such as milk, cheese, and manure for farming.

Please turn in your contributions by Palm Sunday 4/5.

Participate in Lent Madness beginning Thursday February 27

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 Saintly 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.

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?



Stations of the Cross Devotion on Tuesdays

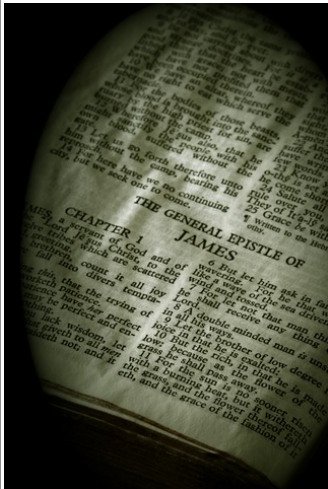
The devotion known as the Way of the Cross is an adaptation to local usage of a custom widely observed by pilgrims to Jerusalem: the offering of prayer at a series of places in that city traditionally associated with the Lord's passion and death. Our adaptation of stations of the cross, written by our deacon, will be celebrated every Tuesday during Lent at 10:00am in place of our usual morning prayer service. All are welcome to participate in this service; there is a place for all.

Lenten Fridays @ Ascension

- When:** Evening Prayer 6:00 PM - Dinner 6:45 PM
Where: The chapel and Hawks Hall
What: Tasty Meatless Potluck Dinner and theological conversation
Why: Lent is a holy time for prayer and community!
What dates: Friday March 6, 13, 20, 27; April 3



Come share prayer time, a tasty and filling meal, and prayerful conversation. There will be a sign-up sheet for meatless pot luck dishes. Any questions, please talk to Pastor Josh.



Lenten Class!

I am excited to share that I will be leading a class/bible study this Lenten season on The Epistle of James.

If you are not very familiar with James, it is a short New Testament letter with a fascinating history and a great jumping-off point for conversation. Relatively uncovered in the lectionary, James should be somewhat novel for most.

We will gather on Wednesday evenings between Ash Wednesday and Holy Week (from March 4th through April 1st) which will give us five evenings to do a deep dive into James and all the various questions it raises about the Christian faith.

I hope you can join us—more details to come!

Tim Hamlin, Diocesan Discerner

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.

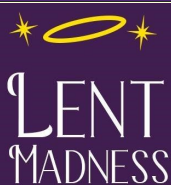
IT'S TRADITION! SHROVE TUESDAY

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 25](#) for Ascension's own interpretation of this old Anglican custom. It's Tradition!



About Lent Madness

Lent Madness began in 2010 as the brainchild of the Rev. [Tim Schenck](#). In seeking a fun, engaging way for people to learn about the men and women comprising the Church's Calendar of Saints, Tim came up with this unique Lenten devotion. Combining his love of sports with his passion for the lives of the saints, Lent Madness was born on his blog "[Clergy Family Confidential](#)" which has subsequently moved locations and become "[Clergy Confidential](#)."

The format is straightforward: 32 saints are placed into a tournament-like single elimination bracket. Each pairing remains open for a set period of time and people vote for their favorite saint. 16 saints make it to the Round of the Saintly 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. **If you're not sure about terminology, [check out our glossary](#). It's free!**



Tim and Scott discussing the relative merits and saintliness of Athanasius vs. Florence Nightingale

The major change from 2010 to 2011 was the introduction of four "celebrity bloggers" to champion particular saints through the Faithful Four. In 2012 we partnered with [Forward Movement](#) and Executive Director Scott Gunn to create our own website and broaden the number of people involved in the writing process, with Tim and Scott serving as the self-appointed Supreme Executive Committee.

Along the way we've added more celebrity bloggers, a poster-sized bracket, weekly Monday Madness videos, and the *Saintly Scorecard*, an annual publication containing all 32 first round bios, information about how to participate in Lent Madness as a congregation, and an essential Vocabulary List to decipher all things Lent Madness.

We've also inspired thousands of people along the way by forming an online community of people who are passionate about taking their faith but not themselves too seriously. Articles and spots about Lent Madness have appeared in the *Washington Post*, NPR, Huffington Post, FOXNews, NBC, USAToday, and even *Sports Illustrated*.

As Lent Madness continues to grow and evolve, what won't change is the essence of Lent Madness: allowing people to get to know some amazing people who have come before us in the faith and reminding one another that there's no reason for a dreary Lenten discipline. If this helps people connect with the risen Christ during this season of penitence and renewal, and have a bit of fun in the process, then it continues to be worthwhile. We hope you'll participate fully this Lent and vote with reckless abandon! (*Once* — this isn't Chicago). <https://www.lentmadness.org/about/>



NOTES FROM THE LOFT

February ~ Groundhog Day, Candlemas, Super Bowl, Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day, Ash Wednesday ~ such a variety of celebrations, some of which will be observed at Ascension ~

On **February 2**, we celebrate Candlemas, also known as the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus Christ and the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since Jesus is the light of the world, many congregations bless candles on this day and hold candle-lit processions. The two anthems for this day reflect two aspects of Candlemas ~

Christ, Whose Glory Fills the Skies set by Frederick Candlyn to reflect Christ as the world's true light;

Nunc Dimittis by Frank Henry Shera ~ the Song of Simeon, *for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ~ to be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.*

In addition, on this day we'll be joined once again by the AlmaNova Duo, Jessica Pierce, flute, and Almer Imamovic, acoustic guitar, who will be playing the opening and closing voluntaries.

February 9 ~ Noel Goemanne's *Whom Should I Fear* and *The Peace of God* by John Rutter.

February 16 ~ I'll be out of town, so worship will be led by a substitute.

February 23 ~ the last Sunday after Epiphany ~

Christ Upon the Mountain Stands by Robert Lehman; Dmitri Bortniansky's *Cherubim Song (No. 7).*

*O God, whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven:
Be with us, we beseech thee, as we seek to perfect the praises of thy children on earth;
and grant to us even now such glimpses of thy beauty
that we may be made worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

~ The Royal School of Church Music



Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

What is Ash Wednesday and where did it originate?

The first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday comes the day after Shrove Tuesday. Traditionally a day of repentance, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent

At Ash Wednesday Masses and services, ashes are imposed on the foreheads of the faithful. The priest or minister marks the forehead of each participant with black ashes in the shape of a cross. Traditionally, the ashes come from the burning of the previous year's palms. At Ascension, parishioners bring the palms they have saved from last year to the church the week before Ash Wednesday. These are burned and used to create the ashes which Father Michael imposes on us. When applying the ashes, the priest says, "Remember, O man, that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return" to remind us of our mortality. After the service, a worshipper traditionally retains the cross until it wears off.



Lent has been observed as a preparation for Easter since the fifth century. In the medieval period, Ash Wednesday was the required annual day of penitential confession occurring after fasting and the remittance of the tithe.

Ashes were used in ancient times to express mourning. Dusting oneself with ashes was the penitent's way of expressing sorrow for sins and faults. Following that tradition, the Anglican Book of Common Prayer designates Ash Wednesday as a day of fasting.

Lent lasts 40 days not counting Sundays because by our tradition every Sunday is a little Easter.

REAL
LIFE. Real
Faith.

Each month, my Spire article is written under the banner “Real Life. Real Faith.” It is meant to conjure up some thought about practicing our faith in the real world. It’s a means to get us thinking not just about our Sunday faith, but also our Monday through Saturday faith as well. In Matthew 4:12-23 (3rd Sunday of Epiphany) the gospel writer recounts the calling of disciples and their commissioning to join Jesus in proclaiming the good news.

Just as the disciples were called to be fishers of people for the Kingdom, we too are called to be ministers of the Gospel in our homes, our work, our community. Sorry folks, but it isn’t just a clergy thing – it’s an all of us thing.

I’ll be the first to acknowledge that it’s no easy task being a minister of the gospel. All too often my inner conflicts, distrust, and dare I say personal prejudices (yes, clergy have them too) get in the way of my proclaiming the good news. It’s a real battle sometimes to proclaim the good news when we’re struggling to make sense of it to ourselves.

Ted Loder, in his book “Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle” offers us this prayer to take into battle:

Sustain Me in the Coming Then ~

O God, empty me of angry judgement, and aching disappointments,
and anxious trying,
and breathe into me something like quietness and confidence, that the lion and the lamb in me may lie down together
and be led by a trust as
straightforward as a little child.

Catch my pride and doubt off guard
that, at least for the moment, I may sense your presence and your caring,
and be surprised by a sudden joy rising in me now
to sustain me in the coming then.

Live well, live blessed, be sustained for the battle.
Deacon Ed+

January 26, 2020 Annual Meeting

***Thank You to Jon Prentice &
Dan and Nicole Hanson for the photos***



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 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 Memorial Service for Ruby Spencer 1pm Church Only
2 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass 11:45am Discernment Cmt Mtg/Library <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Vestry Commissioning @ both servicws </div>	3 8:15am—10am Gooden Chapel 2pm—2:50pm Gooden Mindfulness Class/Hall <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Fr. Bamberger Out of Office / Clergy Support Group </div>	4 10am Prayer in the Library 2pm—2:50pm Gooden Mindfulness Class/Hall	5 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	6 7am Mass 8:15am—Gooden Chapel w/Eucharist 9am Forum 10:15am Staff Mtg 3pm- 6pm-Organist Rehearsal/Church 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal/Hall	7 <div style="text-align: center;"> Spiritual Direction Rectors Office 10:30am Private </div>	8 Use of Gooden Kindergarten Room for Kinder Playdate 8am-2pm Memorial Svc for Dorarose Ryerson 11am @ Oakdale Mortuary
9 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass 11:45am Discernment Cmt Mtg/Library	10 8:15am—Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel 9am—Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel 2pm—2:50pm Gooden Mindfulness Class/Hall <div style="text-align: center;"> Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm </div>	11 10am Prayer in the Library 2pm—2:50pm Gooden Mindfulness Class/Hall <div style="text-align: center;"> Vestry Mtg Hall/7:30pm </div>	12 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	13 7am Mass 8:15am—Gooden Chapel 9am Forum	14	15 <div style="text-align: center;"> Memorial Svc - Interment for Nosek/Gregory 1pm Church Only </div>
16 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Covering Clergy- McGuffie </div>	17 <div style="text-align: center;">  PRESIDENTS DAY </div> <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Parish Office Closed </div>	18 10am Prayer in the Library 2pm—2:50pm Gooden Mindfulness Class/Hall <div style="text-align: center;"> Daisy Troop Meeting Hall 4pm-5:30pm </div>	19 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall <div style="text-align: center;"> House Church/Dinner 6:30pm Meehan Family Home </div>	20 7am Mass 8:15am—Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 3pm- 6pm-Organist Rehearsal/Church 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal/Hall	21	22 <div style="text-align: center;"> Memorial Service and Reception For Guido Meindle Senior 11am Church & Hall </div>
Fr. Bamberger Out of Office—GOE's in NC						
23 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	24 8:15am—10am Gooden Chapel 2pm—2:50pm Gooden Mindfulness Class/Hall <div style="text-align: center;"> Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm </div>	25 10am Prayer in the Library 2pm—2:50pm Gooden Mindfulness Class/Hall <div style="text-align: center;"> SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER HAWKS HALL 5:30PM-7PM </div>	26 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall <div style="border: 2px solid red; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE TIMES 7AM, NOON, 6PM </div>	27 7am Mass 8:15am—Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 10:15am Staff Mtg 3pm- 6pm-Organist Rehearsal/Church 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal/Hall <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> VOTING SETUP/HALL </div>	28	29 <div style="background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> VOTING IN HAWKS HALL Saturday, 2/29 through Tuesday, 3/3 </div>