

The February SPIRE

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



Upcoming Events

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



Its that time of year! Georgia Dougall is selling GS Cookies. You can order them by going to her website at <https://www.gsdigitalcookie.com/landing/14/133dca01-29c3-4bdb-ac9b-6ea54b3d0462/en-US/False>

From the Rector

Dr Debora Huffman began her ministry here at Ascension in August of 2000. Over the years, so much has transpired that I want to reflect upon. First, Dr. Deb brought the stability and professionalism to our music program that was much needed. We had had a rocky few years prior to Dr. Deb's arrival. She quickly re-built the choir and engaged our traditional way of worship with enthusiasm. In 2003, Dr. Deb helped us as a congregation begin to use Rite 2. In 2007, Dr. Deb organized a wonderful concert commemorating Sierra Madre's Centennial featuring music from 1907.



Dr. Deb's position as an Associate Dean at the Thornton School of Music gave her access to some very fine musicians. For many years, Dr. Deb participated fully in the Association of Anglican Musicians. She would return from conventions with new ideas and music. As a result, our music program has never been stagnant.

When Dr. Deb and her husband Hughes retired from USC and moved to Menifee, I feared she would retire from here as well. But not so. Even after the devastating loss of Hughes in 2016, Dr. Deb persisted in making the long haul twice a week. When COVID hit in 2020, Dr. Deb helped us pivot to online worship while recording from home.

Words can hardly express how deeply I respect our beloved Dr. Deb. I count myself as very fortunate to have been able to enjoy such a great priest/musician relationship for these many years. It should be noted that Dr. Deb has the longest tenure of any musician here at Ascension. I will miss her very much, as will all of you.

Well done, good and faithful servant!

MAB+

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, February 27th

After the ONE service at 9:30am

- ◇ Meeting to be held in the church
- ◇ No Sunday School

Go to page 2 for more information about the Annual Meeting.

JANUARY 2022 Pledge Payment Snapshot



2022 Budget \$210,000

YTD Budget:	\$17,500
YTD Actual:	\$15,788
Difference:	\$-1,712



Everything you always wanted to know about *The Annual Meeting (but)*



Why do we have an Annual Meeting? Our parish for legal purposes is a corporation. We have Parish Bylaws which correspond to the Canons of the Episcopal Church and

the Diocese of Los Angeles. These state that our parish as well as every parish must have an Annual Meeting to elect “directors” which form the Vestry. The Vestry has responsibility for the “temporalities” of the parish. As in other congregations, it is the custom at Ascension that reports for the previous year are received, the budget for the next year, which the Vestry has already passed, is presented, and other business may be conducted. Occasionally, the Bylaws may be amended. Our Parish Bylaws state that the Rector presides, or in the absence of the Rector, the Senior Warden presides. At the Annual Meeting, we follow standard parliamentary procedure.

Who can attend? Everyone interested in our parish can attend the Annual Meeting. It is required that the time and place be announced beforehand. Our Parish Bylaws require us to have present twenty members who can vote to have a quorum.

Who can vote? The Diocesan Canons were changed a few years ago to include persons sixteen years and older as adult communicants in good standing. The canons were amended this year to essentially specify that in order to be an elector they must be:

- ⇒ An adult member of this parish who has received Holy Communion in this parish at least three times during the preceding year. (Spiritual Communion during the pandemic meets this requirement).
- ⇒ An adult communicant of this parish who for the previous year has been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and has been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, in order to be considered a communicant in good standing.

A list of our qualified electors has been published by the Vestry, and *will be* posted on the bulletin board in Hawks Hall. Our Parish Bylaws and the canons do not permit either proxies or absentee ballots.

Who can be elected to the Vestry? Our Parish Bylaws and the Canons state that anyone qualified to vote at the Annual Meeting can be elected to the Vestry. Our Parish Bylaws also state that a member of our Vestry must be a confirmed communicant and cannot be a member of another church. **It is expected (but not required) that anyone serving on the Vestry must be willing to commit the time necessary to serve, be regular in their attendance, be an example of good stewardship, and have a passion for the work of Christ in this parish.** Some folks have already been nominated either by the nominating committee or by indicating their desire to run, and there will be time during the meeting for nominations from the floor as well.

Serving on the Vestry... Each year at our Annual Meeting, the parish elects a new class of vestry members – this year we will be electing three persons for regular three year terms. The “job description” includes being a committed member of the parish who is regular in attendance and giving and who is willing to offer his or her gifts for the leadership of this parish. Vestry members may have particular responsibilities or portfolios and will be serving on such sub-committees as Finance, Insurance, and Operations & Property. Meetings are held monthly, and attendance at the annual workday/retreat is critical.

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

During February, we continue our observance of Epiphany. Anthems throughout the month include:

- 2/6 – *There’s A Wideness in God’s Mercy* by Maurice Bevan
- 2/13 – Robert W. Lehmann’s setting of *The Beatitudes*
- 2/20 – *Teach Me Thy Song, O Lord* by Craig Courtney
- 2/27 – K. Lee Scott’s *The Glory of Christ*

For 58 years I’ve been making music from the organ bench, 22 years at Ascension ~ now it’s time to pass the responsibility on to someone else. As I write my farewell *Notes from the Loft*, I think of the Apostle Paul’s words, “I thank my God on every remembrance of you.” It has been a joy and a privilege to serve you during this time; and although I’ll miss you terribly, I’ll carry you in my heart, cherishing the memories and the music we’ve made together.

Continued on next page...

NOTES FROM THE LOFT continued...

I'd like to thank my dear colleagues and friends in the choir ~ Susan, Colette, Carol, Liz, Lavette, Ted, and Charley, as well as former choristers. I'm extremely grateful to Father Michael for his collaboration ~ I can't imagine a finer clergy colleague. And to all of you in the congregation who've befriended and supported me and the music program ~ my deepest appreciation.



*When in our music God is glorified, and adoration leaves no room for pride,
It is as though the whole creation cried Alleluia!*

~Fred Pratt Green

Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist



Lent is approaching, and I'm thinking about what I can do differently to make it more meaningful and challenging. Maybe I'll give something up, maybe how I pray. Maybe I'll pray in the spirit of knowing God loves me as I am and that he loves me despite my best efforts to screw up. Maybe I'll pray in the spirit of knowing God is happiest when I'm just being myself and that my prayers are coming from uncertainty and from the mess I call my life.

How shall I pray?
Are tears prayers, Lord?
Are screams prayers,
or groans
or sighs
or curses?
Can trembling hands be lifted to you,
or clenched fists
or the cold sweat that trickles down my back
or the cramps that know my stomach?
Will you accept my prayers, Lord,
my real prayers,
rooted in the muck and mud and rock of my life,
and not just the pretty, cut-flower, gracefully-arranged
bouquet of words?
Will you accept me, Lord,
as I really am,
messed up mixture of glory and grime?
Lord, Help me!
Help me to trust that you do accept me as I am,
that I may be done with self-condemnation
and self-pity
and accept myself
Help me to accept you as you are, Lord:
mysterious,
hidden,
strange,
unknowable;
and yet to trust
that your madness is wiser
than my timid, self-seeking sanities,
and nothing that you've ever done
has really been possible,
so I may dare to be a little mad, too.

(from: Ted Loder, "How Shall I Pray?" Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle (1984)

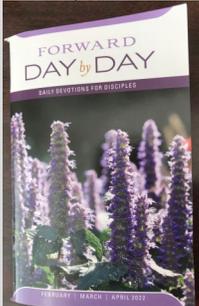
Be well, be blessed, pray as you are.

Deacon Ed+

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 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 11am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel 12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall	2 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	3 9am Rector's Forum 1:10pm Gooden Chapel 2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal	4	5
6 8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	7 Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group 8:30am Yoga/Hall 1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall	8 11am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel 12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall	9 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	10 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg 1:10pm Gooden Chapel 2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal	11	12
13 8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	14 8:30am Yoga/Hall 1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall	15 11am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel 12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 7:30pm Vestry Meeting Hall	16 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	17 1:10pm Gooden Chapel 2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal	18	19
20 8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	21 8:30am Yoga/Hall 1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall	22 11am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel 12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall	23 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	24 1:10pm Gooden Chapel 10:30am Staff Mtg 2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal	25	26
27 <div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> ANNUAL MEETING FOLLOWS THE ONE SERVICE AT 9:30AM *Meeting will be held in the church* </div>	28 8:30am Yoga/Hall 1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall				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.	