

The February 2023 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.



**February
22nd**

Noon
&
6pm

Mass & Imposition of Ashes

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, February 26th

10:30am
Hawks Hall

- ◊ Only (1) Mass on Sunday, February 26th, at 9:30am.
- ◊ No Sunday School
- ◊ A Structured Potluck will follow the meeting. (The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board in Hawks Hall).

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

JANUARY 2023

Pledge Payment Snapshot



2023 Budget \$210,000

YTD Budget:	\$16,761
YTD Actual:	\$19,964
Difference:	\$+3,203

From the Rector

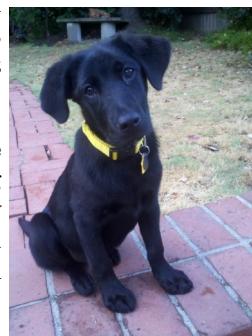
In early July of 2011, Michael Othouse called and gave us the heads up that a puppy was going to be coming up for adoption at the Pasadena Humane Society and that we had best be at the shelter first thing the next morning. Michael was a volunteer at the Humane Society, and he knew we were interested in getting a new dog.



We were particularly interested in a black Labrador puppy. Previously we had had a chocolate Lab and a yellow Lab. So we were at the shelter the next morning as it opened.

And that is how Polo came to live with us. We took him to Puppy Kindergarten, which was an experience because he could barely contain his excitement. Right from the outset, we knew he was a very gregarious and outgoing dog. He loved everybody and everything, except for squirrels. I often thought he'd make a great therapy dog.

Over the past few weeks, he wasn't his normal self. We took him to his vet, and she ran tests and had him x-rayed. The prognosis wasn't good, but he kept having "good days."



But this past weekend, it became clear we were not doing Polo any favor by prolonging his life. As many of you know, this is a really hard decision; but we were fortunate to find a vet who would come to our home. Polo died right at about sunset on Sunday, January 29th.

He was a wonderful dog, and we miss him deeply.

Father Michael+

SAVE THE DATE!

Tuesday, February 21st

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.

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.
- ⇒ 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.

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.

Continued on next page....

IT'S TRADITION! SHROVE TUESDAY...*continued from previous page*

So now that you know the history, plan on joining us **February 21** for Ascension's own interpretation of this old Anglican custom. It's Tradition!



2023 Vestry Nominees



Eric Mulfinger—I am a retired high school math teacher, having taught in Pasadena schools for 31 years, 12 at Westridge and 19 at Marshall Fundamental. Although I was born on Guam when my dad was in the Air Force, I grew up in San Marino, as did my mother before me. My wife Laura and I have lived in our Altadena home for 32 years, a house we moved into a few months after we were married. Laura is a researcher and project administrator at USC's School of Education. Our son Noah is a 28 year-old software engineer in Portland, Oregon. In my retirement, I volunteer with Altadena Historical Society and with a USFS trail restoration crew.

I was baptized as a Presbyterian in 1959, confirmed as a Roman Catholic in 1984, and received into the Episcopal Church in 1990 at All Saints Church in Pasadena, the church where we were married and our son was baptized. Over the decades, I have wandered among Baptist, Lutheran, and Quaker churches; but I arrived 'home' at Ascension in 2017. I attend the 10:15 service and occasionally read as Congregational Lector.



Claudia Foote—I was born and raised Catholic in Burbank and attended parochial school for twelve years. I attended Valley College and then transferred to CSU, Chico where I majored in Home Economics. My professional career was spent in retail as a Women's Wear Buyer at Hinshaw's Dept. Store in Arcadia and eventually Draper's and Damon's. In 2012, I changed careers and went to work for Trader Joe's in their La Canada store where I still work 4 days a week.

Carl and I married in 1991. We moved to Sierra Madre (where Carl grew up) in 2005. Carl became a member of Ascension in 2014. I would attend services with him on Sundays when I wasn't working. Since Carl's passing, I continue to attend the 8:00 service on my Sundays off. Everyone has been so welcoming and supportive. I look forward to learning more about Ascension and getting to know more of the congregation.



Gordon Tomaske—I was born in Seattle, Washington but grew up in Southern California. I have been married to Diane for 33 years and have two grown children, Jonathan and Madeline. Baptized in 1989 at St. Jude's Burbank and confirmed in 1991 at St. Edmund's in San Marino, I now happily attend the 8 am service at Ascension. For the last 6 years, I have served on Ascension's, Vestry, Finance Committee and for the last four years I have served as Senior Warden. I am also part of Ascension's Between the Masses (BTM) study group and attend the Thursday Rector's Forum with Fr. Michael Bamberger.

Professionally, I worked at Times Mirror and the Los Angeles Times for over 20 years in a variety of finance functions, ending my career there as Publisher of the Glendale Newspress and Burbank Leader and finally Director of Targeted Media. For the last 10 years of my career I worked at Southern California Edison as a senior project controls manager before retiring. In retirement my wife and I enjoy visiting our national parks, seeing our Daughter in Portland and visiting family in the Pacific Northwest.



MUSIC AT ASCENSION

NOTES FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

Mr. Robert L. Williamson
Organist-Choirmaster

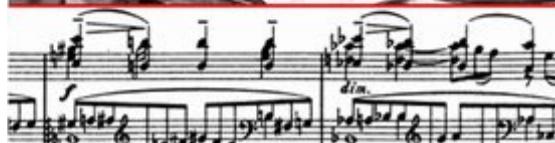
Musical Outreach to the Community

An Evening with Rachmaninoff

All over the world, pianists and musicians are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Sergei Rachmaninoff, one of the most popular composers of the 20th century. Concert pianist Nicholas Galinaitis will bring a selection of solo piano works by Rachmaninoff and other composers to Church of the Ascension in Sierra Madre on Saturday, March 25, 2023 at four o'clock in the afternoon. He will play a variety of music including the famous second sonata in B Flat minor, Op. 36, a piece heavily influenced by the second sonata of Chopin and made famous by pianists Vladimir Horowitz and Van Cliburn. Sergei Rachmaninoff, an émigré from Russia who lived in Beverly Hills in the 1940s, has a special place in Galinaitis's repertoire. He has been playing music of Rachmaninoff ever since he first heard and fell in love with it at age 14. Since 2018, he has committed himself to learning the complete solo works. He is deeply committed to exploring the musical possibilities in performing this passionate and virtuosic music, and is excited to share works, both well-known and lesser-known, with audiences everywhere.



Please join us for an afternoon
of music and discussion in
Hawks Hall
with
Nicholas Galinitis on
Saturday, March 25, 2023
at 4:00pm



Soli Deo Gloria



I've been a Spiritual Director for many years. As of late "the spirituality of anger" has emerged as a recurring theme. Everyone seems to be angry at least some of the time, including myself. Along the way, I've learned a few things about anger, and here's the thing – it's not the enemy it's often made out to be. Anger can be a spiritual emotion.

Understanding the spiritual meaning of anger and accepting its message can be liberating. We often get the message that anger is what our spiritual practices should be able to get rid of, that we should be able to transform it into pure sweet compassion. But what if instead of seeing anger as an abhorrent emotional state, we considered the spiritual meaning of anger. What if we viewed anger not as an enemy but as a dear friend?

Anger, writes psychotherapist [Robert Augustus Masters](#) in: *Spiritual Bypassing*, is "the primary emotional state that functions to uphold our boundaries." When we feel anger, it's an indication that something is wrong—a boundary has been crossed or a need is not being met. It's not always just about our individual selves, either—anger is the appropriate response to oppression.

Anger is an emotion like any other, and we have as much right to feel it as sadness or joy. We have about as much "right" to feel any emotion as we do to hunger or thirst. We don't choose what to feel; we just feel. Our choice lies in what we do with the emotion.

Many spiritual traditions, Masters explains, insist we transform our anger into compassion, implying that anger is not a "spiritual" emotion. This idea confuses anger with aggression, the emotion with "what is actually done with anger." Anger can actually be an expression of compassion, a willingness to uphold boundaries that are sacred or stand up for someone who is being oppressed. Compassion and anger can absolutely coexist.

Anger is not an action, though one of its characteristics may be the urge to do something and do it fast. Anger can help us overcome fear in order to take some action. So how do we know what action to take?

First, we must slow down. We must be still.

Doing this is incredibly challenging. There are two types of anger: *righteous anger* is very calm and grounded and knows exactly what must be done. It's also very rare. Much more common is *anxious anger*, which is fidgety and confused, impatient for action. This is usually because anxious anger is mixed up with fear or hurt (or both), and the anger is trying to find a way out of feeling those other things. Sitting still brings those other emotions to the surface.

And so, we must sit still. We must listen to the message of the anger even if all it knows is that something is wrong. We have to give it a chance to talk to us, to dialogue with it, even ask it some questions. What boundary has been crossed? What needs can we address right now? Can we be honest about those needs with compassion for the other person's viewpoint?

Anger may be quick to place blame on someone else; but if we can slow down enough to try to identify what boundaries have been crossed, we may be able to see the situation more clearly with compassion for ourselves and others.

In Masters' view, spirituality is not about finding ways to avoid or eradicate our feelings. Its work is deeply emotional in nature, and it's about getting close enough to ourselves that we can see to the heart of what's happening, be honest about it, and care for ourselves and each other to the best of our ability.

Rejecting our emotions is not the path. Listening closely to the messages of the heart and honoring them, even and especially when they are uncomfortable to sit with—that's the practice. That's when anger transforms itself from enemy to friend.

Be well, be blessed, be caring to yourself and others.

Deacon Ed+

**POTLUCK
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2023
FOLLOWING THE ONE SERVICE AT 9:30 AM**

On Sunday, February 26th, the Church will be conducting the Annual Meeting following the ONE Service, which will begin at 9:30 am.

Below is a condensed version of the potluck sign-up sheet. Your Hospitality Hostess will be providing the main dish. The sign-up sheet will be posted in Hawks Hall, please stop by to add your name and contribution. Or you may email or text me at: lisawagner069@gmail.com or 626.710.8909.



***MAIN DISH PROVIDED BY LISA WAGNER
BARBECUE PULLED PORK***

5 doz. Brioche Buns; Cole Slaw; Potato salad, or your own creation; Deviled Eggs; Baked Beans Mac & Cheese; Potato Chips or Kettle chips; and Desserts.

Respectfully,
Lisa Wagner, Hospitality Hostess

Another Way to Welcome Refugees:

Help Them Keep Clean

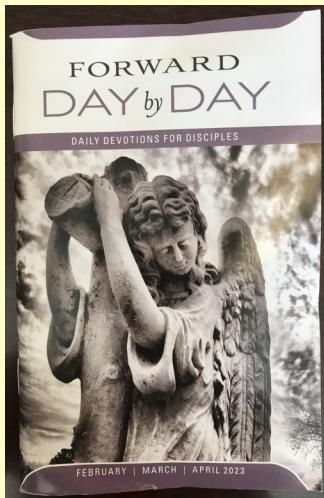
We have a new opportunity to help refugees who have just arrived in America and are settling in the Los Angeles basin. The volunteer coordinator at the Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service (IRIS) is looking for donations of welcome bags containing essential paper products and cleaning supplies that we could give to families when they get an apartment. As you're probably well aware, these items aren't cheap. A welcome bag containing one package each of dish detergent, bar soap, laundry soap, dish cloths, scouring pads, toilet paper, and paper towels adds up to almost \$50 at Von's or Ralph's.

I believe our parish could supply at least three welcome baskets to begin with. If you'd like to donate the cost of one, or part of one, make your check payable to Church of the Ascension and put Refugee Welcome Basket in the memo line. If you'd like to shop for a basket yourself, that's great! Use the list above. Please do not buy large packages that would need to be split among multiple bags so that each family can receive an intact package of everything. Smaller packages are fine—a four-pack of toilet paper or 36-ounce bottle of laundry soap, for example. Bring donations to the church and leave them in Hawks Hall. We'll furnish colorful shopping bags to carry the items to our new neighbors.

IRIS will be letting us know of needs for furniture, kitchen wares, etc., as the new families arrive.

Submitted by Carol Rasmussen





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.

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 2.



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 (\$40.00 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/20f0e44a4a628a7f94-sanctuary>

Altar Flowers: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e44a4a628a7f94-altar>

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 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	2 8:15am Mass	3	4
5 <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	6 8:30am Yoga/Hall	7 Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group	8 8:15am Gooden Chapel 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	9 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall Men's Group Luncheon - Noon RSVP to Fr. Michael	10 8am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel	11 Father Michael Out of Town/GOE's in NC
12 <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	13 8:30am Yoga/Hall	14 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group	15 8:15am Gooden Chapel 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	16 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal	17	18
Father Michael Out of Town/GOE's in NC						
19 <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	20 8:30am Yoga/Hall 	21 8:15am Gooden Chapel 	22 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hal Ash Wednesday Service Times Noon & 6pm	23 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg Noon Clericus Mtg Hall	24	25
26 <u>9:30am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	27 8:30am Yoga/Hall 6:30pm-9:30pm Photochromers Mtg-Hall Private	28 8:15am Gooden Chapel 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets				
Annual Meeting & Structured Potluck 10:30am Hawks Hall *Vestry Organizational Meeting Follows*						