



# The SPIRE 2021

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.\*

**Sunday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Pentecost Sunday**



## From the Rector

One of the things I have been looking forward to over the last couple of months has been celebrating the Eucharist. I have missed being with the congregation in our familiar roles.

When I am sick, I always am tempted to get back to the familiar as soon as possible. I suppose it is in my nature to want to “bounce back.” I have been cautioned this time to take it slowly; and, in fact, I am aware my body is telling me to balance rest and activity.

Be assured, I am making slow and steady progress in my recovery. But this time, “bouncing back” doesn’t seem wise. I am trying to be deliberate and methodical about steps I can take to make a full recovery. But I am celebrating the Eucharist on Trinity Sunday!

I was in a conversation recently with colleagues from all around the country. Different regions are experiencing “re-opening” at different paces and in different ways. All of us expressed a desire for a new normal to emerge; and, for some, it can’t come soon enough.

Our conversation turned to some of the lessons we are learning, and an idea came out that I hadn’t considered. There is a hazard in trying to “snap back.”

While COVID shut things down abruptly in March of 2020, the path towards our new normal is rightly going slowly and, hopefully, deliberately. If we’ve learned anything, “snapping back” to 2019 isn’t an option. While we will recover much that is familiar, there are new ways of doing things and lessons learned which we must carry forward. (For what it is worth, I was using Zoom in 2019! But I hadn’t embraced Zoom as part of weddings going forward.)

Another hazard in “snapping back” is the reality that all of us have experienced the shutdown differently, and we all are re-engaging at our own paces. Some folks are eager to be out and about, and others are a bit anxious about things such as eating in restaurants and being in gatherings such as worship.

“Snapping back” can be a way to ignore the sense of loss that people have experienced. There are folks among us who are grieving for people who have died in this time, grieving for lost milestones such as graduations and other important life events, and grieving for lost jobs and ways of living.

Just like me recovering from my illness, we all need to be deliberate and methodical in moving forward and resisting the urge to “snap back.” With care and concern for each other, we can and will move into our future. Our new normal is on the horizon, and we will have much to celebrate together.

Blessings,  
MAB+

## MAY 2021 Pledge Payment Snapshot



YTD Budget: \$92,083  
YTD Actual: \$100,133  
Difference: \$8,050



**Weekday Mass will resume on  
Thursday mornings beginning  
on June 3, 2021 at 8:15 AM  
in the Chapel.**

## NOTES FROM THE LOFT

I'm sure we all agree how wonderful it is to be back in the sanctuary for worship ~ and to hear the organ again! With the choir on summer hiatus and with Covid restrictions still in place, music-making will be rather limited for the time being. I plan to offer opening and closing organ voluntaries as well as various selections during communion, which I hope you'll enjoy as we await the return of hymnody to our worship.

*At the still point of the universe, all that is not silence is song,  
and all creation, hearing it, dances for joy.  
The song of the universe is the song of life, its rhythms defined by the cadence of time,  
its beauty in its holy harmony.  
The song is sung best when sung by the heart.*



**Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist**

~Alfred V. Fedak



I remember all too well the first time I returned to the place I called home, back to where I grew up. Everything looked the same and different at the same time. But what was most striking was that it all seemed so small. My childhood home, the neighborhood I remember discovering like one of the explorers in my 6<sup>th</sup> grade history book could all fit on the head of a dime. At the time, I thought Thomas Wolfe was right, "You can't go home again."

I grew up, and the world changed, and it has changed again during the last year. This time it is not just the old neighborhood; the pandemic has changed the world I knew forever. But maybe the world has not changed as much as the way I navigate through it. Maybe it's time to find that old history book (on e-Bay) and rediscover the patience, bravery, and tenacity of the early explorers.

The English poet John Donne wrote that "No man is an island," an observation which may well be one of the great lessons of the pandemic. None of us are exploring this new world alone, and all of us need to find our way with the patience, bravery, and the tenacity of the early explorers.

As the pandemic [hopefully] plays out its final act and each of us navigates our own neighborhoods, remember that everyone is moving forward at their own pace and that we all share the same goal...a place we can call home.

For every butterfly, first there is a caterpillar; and in time, we all leave our cocoons and return home. That journey will require patience, bravery, and tenacity with ourselves and those around us.

We are back, and the world has changed. Do not mourn the life you had, celebrate the life that is emerging, and make room for those who share our common field of butterflies.

Lord Jesus, we ask for Your help as we begin to venture out into this new world. Allow us to recognize and experience Your presence in the many blessings You put before us. Open our eyes to the new challenges and exciting opportunities that are unfolding before us. Amen.

Be well, be blessed, live like an explorer. **Deacon Ed+**

## **NEW** and **IMPROVED** flower and candle sign-ups for 2021!!!!!!!

Beginning January 2021, sign-ups for Flower Donations and sign-ups for the Sanctuary Candle will be available on Sign-Up Genius (online) as well as in person in the hallway going into HAWKS HALL.

\*\*\*\*Payment will continue to be made by mailing a CHECK (\$40.00 (flowers) and \$15.00 (Sanctuary candle) -- **now payable to Church of the Ascension.** \*\*\*\* Please include a note giving the date that you signed up for and any dedication.

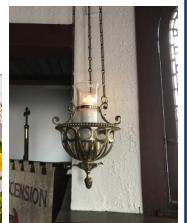
We are looking forward to being able to offer this new way to sign up for flowers and candles and hope it will make donations more convenient for you.

In Christ,  
**St. Anne's Altar Guild**

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>





Although they both have been fully vaccinated, Bishops John Harvey Taylor and Diane Jardine Bruce continue to don masks as a precautionary measure.

## Health and Strength in Community XIV

by [John Harvey Taylor](#) | May 14, 2021 | [From the bishop](#)

My siblings in Christ:

The CDC made our hearts leap with joy on Thursday when it announced that vaccinated people don't have to wear masks or social distance except in hospitals and in crowded indoor spaces such as public transportation.

But please remember that in California, and all the counties and institutions of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, the usual COVID protocols are still in effect — masks, social distancing, and the county color tiers. Los Angeles is yellow right now. Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties are still orange. Keep track of the

semi-liturgical colors [here](#).

State and local officials will soon have more to say about the local impact of the CDC statement. Once they've decided, our diocesan Council of Advice and I will offer guidance to our local leadership teams.

If we end up sounding cautious, remember that many of our folks are in high-risk categories. Remember too that according to media reports, the CDC's announcement was designed in part to encourage vaccination. Just 30% of the U.S. population is fully vaccinated. Vaccine resistance and reluctance persist. Seeing you without your mask, does everyone nearby know you're vaccinated? Seeing them without theirs, do you know they are? Think especially of those who see you without your mask and worry about their unvaccinated children.

Let's remember what got us to this encouraging moment.

Wearing our masks.

Keeping our distance.

Getting vaccinated.

Putting our neighbors and strangers ahead of ourselves, as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ commanded.

As you are, Bishop Bruce and I are sick of wearing our masks. But we give thanks each day for everyone who wore theirs and helped other people stay well. Who made every day for 14 months an Easter Day by helping keep tombs empty.

Giving thanks for the progress we've made against this scourge, remembering all those around the world who lack the blessing of the vaccine that our nation's wealth and privilege confer, let's stay the course.

For now: Love your neighbor. Wear your mask.

With the pandemic scene shifting daily, expert COVID watcher Canon McCarthy and our communications canons will update our on-line resources, including the diocesan COVID FAQ page, as soon as practicable. For now, five quick points:

- We want churches to feel comfortable resuming socially distanced coffee hour and fellowship times (outside if possible, or in well-ventilated indoor spaces) if food and beverage are offered by servers who are vaccinated, masked, and gloved.
- For now, no congregational singing.
- Think twice about unmasking while offering worship.
- Do all you can to offer hospitality for outside meetings, especially twelve-step groups.
- Relying on the reassurance our faith confers that Holy Communion is complete in one kind, and honoring our Anglican tradition of the common cup, we ask our churches not to offer consecrated wine, including in individual servings.

Let any of us know if you have questions.

Yours in Christ's love, **The Rt. Rev. John Harvey Taylor, VII Bishop of Los Angeles**

*The Bishop's Council of Advice on Our Safe Return to Physical Presence*

The Very Rev. Canon Michael Bamberger  
The Very Rev. Peter Browning  
The Rt. Rev. Diane M. Jardine Bruce  
The Very Rev. Tom Carey  
The Very Rev. Canon Ian Davies  
The Very Rev. Canon William Dunn

The Very Rev. Gabriel Ferrer  
The Very Rev. Canon Mark Kowalewski  
The Very Rev. Canon Gregory Larkin  
The Very Rev. Jeannie Martz  
The Rev. Canon Melissa McCarthy  
The Rev. Thomas Quijada-Discavage

The Very Rev. Jeanette Repp  
The Very Rev. Keith Yamamoto  
Canon Richard Zevnik

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

## JUNE 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 8:15am Mass/Chapel 9am Rector's Form Rector's Office	4	5
6 <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	7	8	9	10 8:15am Mass/Chapel 9am Rector's Form Rector's Office 10:30am Staff Meeting Rector's Office	11	12
Deacon Ed Vacation						
13 <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	14	15 7:30pm Vestry Meeting	16 2:00PM Memorial Service Marovich Family Private	17 8:15am Mass/Chapel 9am Rector's Form Rector's Office	18	19
20 FATHER'S DAY <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	21	22	23	24 8:15am Mass/Chapel 9am Rector's Form Rector's Office 10:30am Staff Meeting Rector's Office	25	26 10:30AM Funeral/Interment Ram/Botello Family Private
27 11:00AM ANNUAL PARISH MEETING Youth Minister Vacation <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	28	29	30			