



The June 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.



**Blood Drive
at Church of
the Ascension
on
Wednesday,
July 12th.
Noon—6pm**



Sunday, June 18th

May 2023 Pledge Payment Snapshot



2023 Budget \$210,000

YTD Budget:	\$83,807
YTD Actual:	\$79,544
Difference:	\$-4,263

From the Rector

Return to the new normal after three years of pandemic comes incrementally. This Trinity Sunday, I am offering a change in how we receive Communion here at Ascension. We will return to inviting folks to receive at the Communion rail – either kneeling or standing. Logistically, we won't be able to use the sides, but the kneelers will be in place facing east. (Also, we will continue to provide the small glasses that will be filled from the common cruet.) I will do a little educating for the next few Sundays.

Another small advance is that we will be using our Ascension mugs for Coffee Hour. I'm hoping we can get away from using the disposable coffee cups. BUT... I hope folks will clean up after themselves. If you use a mug, please take it into the kitchen, rinse it out, and put it in the dishwasher. Just like you would do at home.

Most people are choosing to not wear a mask in church, but I support wholeheartedly those who are still wearing a mask. I encourage everyone who is eligible to keep up with Covid vaccines. And of course, if you aren't feeling well, please stay home.

I hope everyone has a pleasant summer...

Father Michael+

Pentecost Sunday ~ May 28th



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-sanctuary1>

Altar Flowers:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E44A4A628A7F94-altar1>





When we're young, old is our aunts and uncles, grandparents, and the elderly couple who live next door. And then just like that, it's not. We begin to wonder where has the time gone, and all those things we wanted to do become items on our constantly revised bucket lists.

Although I did not write the following and I'm not sure who did, it speaks to my heart; and I hope it speaks to yours too. It's wisdom worth sharing with the nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and not yet elderly couple next door. And for the rest of us...it's never too late!

Barely arrived on Monday and it's already Friday.

... and the month is already over.
 ... and the year is almost over.
 ... and already 40, 50, or 60 years of our lives have passed.
 ... and we realize that we lost our parents, friends.
 ... and we realize it's too late to go back...

So... Let's try, despite everything, to enjoy the remaining time...
 Let's keep looking for activities that we like...
 Let's put some color in our grey...
 Let's smile at the little things in life that put balm in our hearts.
 And despite everything, we must continue to enjoy with serenity this time we have left.

Let's try to eliminate the afters...
 I'm doing it after...
 I'll say after...
 I'll think about it after...

We leave everything for later like " after " is ours.
 Because what we don't understand is that:
 afterwards, the coffee gets cold...
 afterwards, priorities change...
 afterwards, the charm is broken...
 afterwards, health passes...
 afterwards, the kids grow up...
 afterwards parents get old...
 afterwards, promises are forgotten...
 afterwards, the day becomes the night...
 afterwards life ends...
 And then it's often too late....

So... Let's leave nothing for later...
 Because still waiting see you later, we can lose the best moments,
 the best experiences,
 the best friends,
 the best family...

The day is today... The moment is now...

Be well, be blessed, don't wait.

Deacon Ed+



Get ready for the Friends In Deed Back to School Backpack and School Supply Drive

Bring your donations to the Church any
time before Monday, July 17th.



Some of the items needed this year are:

- Backpacks--new sturdy backpacks (no red or blue colors please)
- College ruled notebook paper
- Wide ruled notebook paper (early grades will use this)
- College ruled spiral notebooks
- Wide ruled spiral notebooks
- College ruled composition notebooks
- Wide ruled composition notebooks
- Pens - blue and black
- Pencils, including #2 yellow 6-sided for younger grades; mechanical pencils
- Erasers
- Reams copy paper – 1 pkg per family
- Zipper pouch for pens and pencils (3 holed to go in binders)
- Packages dry erase markers
- Packages colored markers (NO Sharpies or permanent markers)



***Click on the link below for a complete list of the supplies that are needed**

<https://friendsindeedpas.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023-Back-to-School-Drive-printable-list.pdf>



**Pastor Josh's Installation
at The Church of Hope
Sunday, May 21st**

**Thank You to Jobi
McGuffie for the photos.**





MUSIC_{AT} ASCENSION

NOTES FROM THE ORGAN BENCH
Mr. Robert L. Williamson
Organist-Choirmaster

Thank you to our Choir.



As we end another choir season, I want to thank all of our musicians for a job well done!

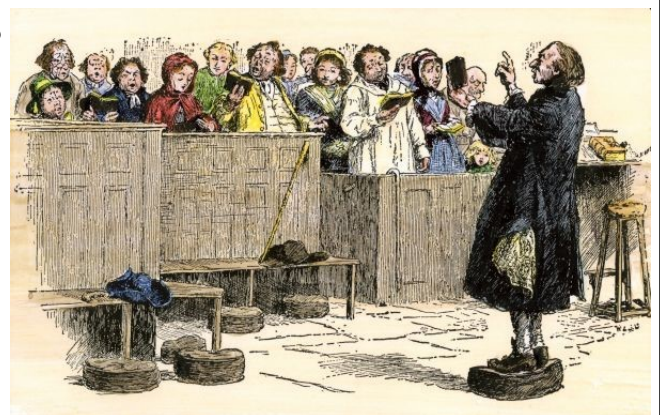
On Sunday, June 4, 2023, we will celebrate our choir in a brunch following the 10:15am service. Please take time to join us and let our musicians know how grateful we are for their dedication and leadership.

If you would like to join the choir in the fall, please reach out to me over the summer. Remember there is strength in numbers.

HYMNS ~ Do you have a favorite?

As we approach the summer, it's always been my tradition to ask the congregation, "What is your favorite hymn". We all have a favorite hymn or tune that makes us smile when we sing. As I plan the music over the summer, I would like to sing your favorite hymn. My mother's favorite hymn was A Mighty Fortress is Our God, Tune: EIN' FESTE BURG. What is yours?

I will have a box at the rear of the church in which you can drop me a note or you can email me as well at robertwilliamson05@gmail.com.



Please keep in mind that the hymns need to come from our approved list of Episcopal Music Resources (*The 1982 Hymnal*, *Wonder Love and Praise*, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, etc.).

*Soli Deo
Gloria*

Afternoon Tea Fundraiser Saturday, May 20th

Thank You to Lisa Wagner and
Fr. Michael for the photos.





THE AFTERNOON TEA WAS SUCCESSFUL!

On Saturday, May 20, 2023, we held an Afternoon Tea Fundraiser; and the proceeds were split equally between the Hospitality account at Ascension and IRIS (Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Service).

The preliminary count of the proceeds is just shy of \$1000.00. I want to thank all of you who participated in this event and who helped make it a successful fundraiser.

I would also like to personally thank a few people without whose help I could not have pulled this event off. Jan Keppler-Kudla worked two full days with me setting up and decorating the church hall, then again on Saturday setting up the buffet table and helping with the clean-up. A thank you to Phoebe Prentice, one of our young parishioners, who from the first moment she walked in the hall asked right away what did I want her to do. I gave tasks with little direction, and she easily completed them one right after another. Phoebe was also a huge help at clean-up time. And lastly, Chris Bamberger, whom I contacted at the last minute to see if he was available to help to bring all the boxes, food, and other supplies from our cars to inside the church. I am so thankful that Chris was willing and able to help us both in the morning and again at the end of the day. Thank you very much, Jan, Phoebe, & Chris!

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



50 Days

Celebrating the Season with Daily Reflections



Faith and Understanding

The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.
—John 3:8

Jesus and Nicodemus are having a somewhat testy conversation. Jesus says, “You must be born from above,” and Nicodemus says he doesn’t quite get it. In fairness, if you heard a phrase like “you must be born from above” for the first time, you might be like Nicodemus, asking for a bit of clarification.

This is when Jesus says, “The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes.” Now this is a good point. He’s saying we don’t need to understand every aspect of every single thing we encounter in order to believe it or to act.

To this day, even with some basic science education, I would be hard-pressed to explain wind beyond vague mutters about barometric pressure and wild gestures pointing to my weather app. I don’t fully understand how my car’s engine works. While I do know a bit of computer programming, I’m typing this on a laptop whose internal engineering is a bit of a mystery, if I’m honest.



Photo by seth schwiet on Unsplash.

Sometimes we let real or imagined questions get in the way. We ask “what if” or “what about” to create diversions from the matter at hand.

I meet a person on the street who asks me for food. “What if he spends the money foolishly?” “What if she really doesn’t need this?” These questions get in the way of me doing what is clearly expected in the gospels: sharing of what I have with those who have less.

We talk ourselves out of proclaiming the Good News of God in Christ because we tell ourselves we don’t fully understand some aspect or other of our faith. “If only I could fully explain the mystery of the Holy Trinity...” And while we make our excuses, people are deprived of hearing the liberating, life-changing news of salvation of Jesus Christ.

It’s funny though. I find myself packing an umbrella when it might rain even though I don’t fully understand the meteorological phenomena that cause me to get wet. Why is it mostly on matters of faith we become inert because we tell ourselves we don’t know enough?

Take Easter, for example. Can I “explain” the empty tomb? No. But I can hear the testimony of the apostles, and I can see its fruits in the lives of countless generations of Christians. That ought to be more than good enough for me and for you.

Scott Gunn
Executive Director, Forward Movement

Article: <https://50days.org/2021/04/faith-and-understanding/>

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
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JUNE 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	2	3 Funeral/ Reception Church & Hall 10am - 4pm DeVaughn Family Private
4 Trinity Sunday 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 11:15am—Choir Appreciation Coffee Hour	5 8:30am Yoga/Hall Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group Discernment Cmt Meeting 7pm Library	6 8:15am Gooden Chapel 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	7 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall Mens Group Monthly Luncheon Nano Café Noon RSVP to Fr. Michael	8 9am Rector's Forum	9	10 SMM Music Recital Church Hall 4pm-8pm Private
11 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	12 8:30am Yoga/Hall	13 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	14 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	15 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	16	17 Baby Shower Church Hall 9am-5pm Hagen Family Private
Father Michael Out of Town/Vacation						
18 Father's Day 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	19 8:30am Yoga/Hall  Parish Office Closed	20 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets Vestry Meeting 7pm Hawks Hall	21 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	22 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum Noon Clericus Mtg Location TBD	23	24
25 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	26 8:30am Yoga/Hall Photochromers Meeting Church Hall 6:30pm- 9:30pm Private	27 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	28 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	29 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	30	