



The March 2024 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.



"Here's a unique way to support our parish! If you have a car, truck, boat or other vehicle that's become a nuisance, you can now donate that vehicle to Ascension. You'll be able to write the value of the vehicle off as a tax deduction and Ascension will benefit from the proceeds of its sale. Simply call **855-500-RIDE** or visit

<http://www.careasy.org/nonprofit/the-episcopal-church-of-the-ascension>

to schedule a free pickup. All you need is the vehicle's title-- the CARs service will handle the rest."

CARS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

based out of San Diego, California.

FEBRUARY 2024 Pledge Payment Snapshot



2024 Budget \$205,150

YTD Budget: \$34,192

YTD Actual: \$37,140

Difference: \$+2,948

From the Rector

Towards the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer in the Proper Preface during Lent, we hear these words - "You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts, and prepare with joy for the Paschal feast; that, fervent in prayer and in works of mercy, and renewed by your Word and Sacraments, they may come to the fullness of grace which you have prepared for those who love you."

During Lent this year, this prayer can serve us well as the focus of our Lenten observance. It seems to boil down to two simple intentions - cleansing our hearts and preparing with joy. How do we live this out?

As the preface continues, we hear about being fervent in prayer and in works that give life to others and about being engaged in the liturgical life of the church.

I hope that this Lent continues to be a time for all of us to focus on the basics. Whatever disciplines you may have taken on this year, hold them to this simple test - do they help cleanse your heart and do they draw you toward joy?

I am particularly struck by the concept of joy. Lent is sometimes thought to be gloomy and weighted with reminders of our wretchedness, but this prayer frames the season as one in which we move closer and closer to joy. Here Lent almost has that same anticipatory quality as Advent

I look forward to holding in tension the solemnity and the building of joy this Lent.

Blessings,
MAB+

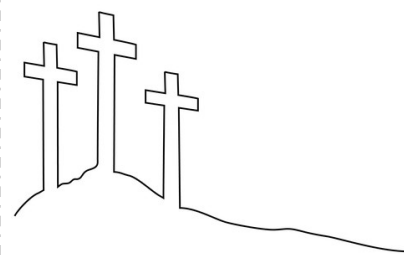
Holy Week, Easter Services

Palm Sunday March 24

Mass (Rite I) 8:00 AM
Mass (Rite II) 10:15 AM

Tenebrae March 27

Mass 7:00 PM



Maundy Thursday March 28

Mass 8:15 AM
Foot Washing and Mass 7:00 PM
Watch at Altar of Repose 9 PM -10:30 PM

Good Friday March 29

Stations of the Cross Noon
Good Friday Liturgy 7:00 PM

Easter Day March 31

The Great Vigil and
1st Eucharist of Easter 6:00 AM
Easter Brunch 8:00 AM
Festival High Mass 10:15 AM

2024 Vestry Members

Officers:

Rector/CEO
Senior Warden
Junior Warden
Clerk of the Vestry
Treasurer (*Budget, Investment*)

The Very Reverend Canon Michael Bamberger
 Gordon Tomaske
 Cameron Cox
 TBD
 Eric Mulfinger

Term of Office

<u>2024 Term</u>	<u>2025 Term</u>	<u>2026 Term</u>
Cameron Cox	Eric Mulfinger	Walker Williams
Jon Prentice	Claudia Foote	Jean Rowe
Pam Harrison	Gordon Tomaske	Matt Gorman



Fr. Bamberger



Eric Mulfinger



Pam Harrison



Claudia Foote



Jon Prentice



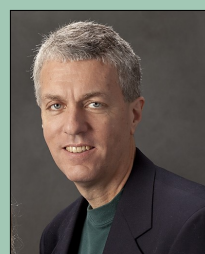
Matt Gorman



Cameron Cox



Jean Rowe



Gordon Tomaske



Walker Williams

Help sort books for refugees on March 10

Our congregation has received a generous donation of books for new refugee families. Could you help sort the books into age and reading levels so that the caseworkers can easily select age-appropriate books for the new families?

You don't need to be a librarian or teacher to do this job. If you're able to help, please join us on March 10 after the 10:15 service for half an hour or so. Treats will be provided.

The Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service is currently settling 15 to 30 new arrivals (individuals and families) in the Los Angeles basin each month, and the need for English instruction has overwhelmed available community resources. IRIS is about to start a three-month trial program to teach basic English to newcomers using Zoom. After the trial is complete, IRIS hopes to expand the program to serve more refugees.

If you have any interest in helping with this initiative, please talk to me (Carol Rasmussen). IRIS will provide lesson plans and training.

Carol Rasmussen



There are times in my life when I feel pulled and torn. Sometimes, it's between work and wanting to spend more time with friends and family. Sometimes, it's about wanting to sit down with a good book but feeling guilty that the chores aren't getting done and the to-do list is not getting shortened. Sometimes, it's about saying yes when I really want to say no. Sometimes, I just want to take a long walk, but can't find the time.

Whatever the pull, it's the experience of being conflicted, the unsettled and restless self in conflict with that part of us that desires harmony and peace. Our seasons of restlessness and discontent are reflections of our separateness from God and the belief that he's not listening anyway, so why bother, why pray.

What in your life is leaving you restless, discontented and separated from God?

It's important to remember that our desires and what we pray for are given to us by God, longings which he gives to the soul to help it progress toward divine union, to free it and to spur us into action.

Did you know that you can only ask for what you have already begun to experience? Otherwise, it would never occur to you to ask for it. Further, God seems to plant within us the desire to pray for what God already wants to give us; and, even better, God has already begun to give it to us! We are always just seconding the motion, but the first motion is always and forever from God. The fact that you prayed at all means God just started giving to you a second ago. Isn't that wonderful to know!

It's not that we pray and God answers. It is that our praying is already God answering within us and through us.

Be well, be blessed, hear what God is saying.

Deacon Ed+

Bring Bells on Easter Day!

Easter is a time for joyous bell ringing. Once again, I encourage everyone to bring bells - bells of all sorts and sizes - to the Easter Day services. We ring them during the first singing of the Gloria in excelsis and with gusto during the singing of the hymn "Jesus Christ is Risen Today."

During Eastertide, instead of ringing the Angelus on the large bell at the conclusion of the service, we will ring the Regina Coeli. This joyful devotion dates from the 12th century and invites us to rejoice with Mary at the Resurrection. The text is –

Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
The Son whom you merited to bear, alleluia.
Has risen, as He said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.
V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.

Let us pray. O God, who through the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ gave rejoicing to the world, grant, we pray, that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may obtain the joy of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The bell will ring four sets of two strokes, with pauses between each set, followed by eight peals. As in most things, this devotion is only one option in the broad spectrum of personal piety.

As we approach Holy Week and Easter, I pray that your Lent has been a time of renewal and growth.

MAB+





Forward Today: The world, or your life?

February 21, 2024/Forward Today, Scott Gunn

Dear friends in Christ,

The February 25th Gospel brings a challenging message from Jesus. Among other things, Jesus says, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?"

Wow. That's rough. But it makes total sense. If all I worry about is protecting myself, I end up closing myself off from opportunities for God's grace to work in my life and, through me, in the world. It makes everything about me. But if I can make everything about God's grace and mercy, I begin to live a life that is steeped in gratitude and overflowing with love.



Photo by [Adriel Kloppenburg](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Jesus says we have to choose whether riches are more important to us than living an abundant, joyful life. If I spend my life chasing earthly things, I will almost certainly miss out on knowing heavenly things. Focusing on stuff leads me to lose my soul for the sake of... not much, really.

But when we make God's grace and mercy the core of our being, we discover gratitude beyond our imagining. And we cannot help but spill over with mercy and grace for the world around us. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is truly astounding.

This season of Lent offers us the gift of a time to focus on what's important. Perhaps we first need a reminder so we notice what's important! And then we can try to live the life to which Jesus calls us—rooted in gratitude, grace, and mercy.

I hope you'll join me in asking the big question. What's most important? Chasing worldly things? Or seeking heavenly things?

Yours faithfully,

Scott Gunn, Executive Director

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 (\$50.00 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>



MEN'S GROUP LUNCHEON

Wednesday, March 6th

Nano Café @ Noon

RSVP to Fr. Michael

EASTER FLOWERS



As the end of Lent draws near, we start looking forward to Holy Week and the joyous season of Easter. In Altar Guild, we eagerly await transforming our beloved sanctuary to an outward sign of our inner joy for Easter Sunday.

In order to accomplish this transformation, we need your generous monetary donations now for the flowers we will purchase and arrange for Easter Sunday. Envelopes for flower donations are available at the back of the church and in the hallway to Hawks Hall.

St. Anne's Altar Guild thanks you in advance for your continued support of our ministry.

Lynne P Holl, Altar Guild Directress

EASTER MUSIC



Please consider making a contribution to our Easter music program. Music offering envelopes are available at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

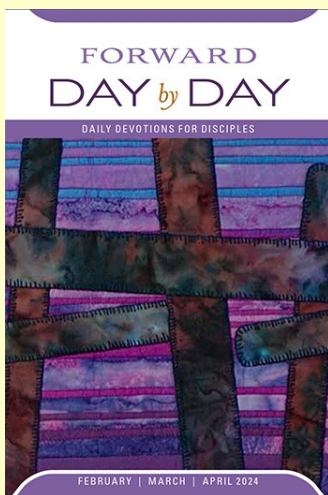
Thank You for your support.

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 March 24th.



A \$2 donation is appreciated.



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.



SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

February 13, 2024



Thank You to
Jon Prentice for the
photos.





ANNUAL MEETING & POTLUCK

February 25, 2024



Thank You to
Jon Prentice 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

MARCH 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 Voting in Hawks Hall
3 <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	4 8:15am Gooden Chapel Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group	5 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	6 8:15am-9-45am Gooden Chapel Men's Group Luncheon Nano Café Noon—RSVP to Fr. Michael	7 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	8	9 11am Funeral for Alyce Rohrer 12pm Funeral Reception for Alyce Rohrer in Hawks Hall
Voting in Hawks Hall						
10 <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	11 8:30am Yoga/Hall	12 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	13 8:15am-9-45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	14 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	15	16
17 <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	18 8:15am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	19 Noon Clericus Mtg Location TBD 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets 7pm Vestry Meeting/Hall	20 8:15am-9-45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	21 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	22	23
24 PALM SUNDAY <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	25 8:15am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	26 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	27 8:15am-9-45am Gooden Chapel	28 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	29	30
HOLY WEEK SERVICE DATES & TIMES ARE NOTED ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE NEWSLETTER						
31  SEE 1ST PAGE FOR THE WORSHIP AND BRUNCH SCHEDULE.						