



The May 2024 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.



From the Rector

I find it helpful if I take the time to think about things that I am looking forward to. In some cases, it is events, and in some cases, it is a reunion with friends and colleagues. There a few of both types coming up.

On Sunday, May 12th, we will celebrate Ascension Sunday with one service at 9:30am. In particular, I'm looking forward to the Reverend Allison English being with us. Allison was sponsored for ordination by Ascension in 2008. Allison and her family live in Cincinnati, Ohio where she is the Rector of Calvary Episcopal Church. It has been six years since we were together, although we have talked on the phone frequently. (And it's Mothers Day!)

On Sunday, June 9th, we look forward to welcoming back the Right Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori for our Episcopal Visitation. Bishop Katharine will be celebrating, preaching, and confirming at the SINGLE service at 9:30am. (If you are interested in being confirmed or being received, please let me know as soon as possible. Confirmation classes will be held Saturdays – May 4th, 11th and 18th from 9:30am until 11am in my office.)

Also on June 9th, we are welcoming back to the congregation the Kassabian family. I'm looking forward to Mother Robin "hanging her alb" in our sacristy. This summer, the Garcia family is moving back to the LA area, and Father Francisco has asked if he can use our library one or two days a week. Of course, I said YES!

Finally, there are two opportunities that some of our parishioners are involved in. Liz Levie has been singing for many years with the Sierra Madre Chorale, and they are presenting their 30th Annual Spring Concert on Friday, May 31st at 7:30 pm and again on Sunday, June 2nd at 5pm. Bothe concerts are being held at St. James Methodist Church in Pasadena. Contact Liz for information and tickets. On Saturday, June 1st, the British Home is having their June Faire from 9:30am to 2:30 pm. Three of our parishioners are residents of the British Home. Contact Debbie Bamberger for more information.

So much to look forward to. So much to be grateful for!

Father Michael+



APRIL 2024 Pledge Payment Snapshot



2024 Budget \$205,150

YTD Budget:	\$68,383
YTD Actual:	\$71,005
Difference:	+\$2,622

FRIENDS IN DEED *

Please join in Ascension's monthly collection of specific "Gold Items" for Friends in Deed. They include canned tuna and chicken, hearty soups, stew, chili, pasta and pasta sauce, peanut butter, cereal, rice, oil, sugar, flour, fruit juice, and vegetable juice (V8).

Look for the donation bin at the back of the church.





I can't help but wonder how many of you decided to include your junk drawers as part of your spring cleaning. What spring cleaning....is he crazy? Don't answer that. OK, let's forget the spring cleaning and peek into our relational junk drawers and see what we find.

What's a relational junk drawer? Glad you asked. It's the dark place in our hearts where our better angels never tread. It's where we stuff people when we don't know how to deal with their quirks, shortcomings, physical differences, choices, anything that conjures up fear, threatens us and makes us uncomfortable. It's the scary place in our soul where we hide our true feelings out of fear of rejection or conflict. It's the

dark corner in our minds where we tell ourselves: "I'll deal with him or her tomorrow, not at all, or perhaps do what I can to simply erase them all together and in the process strip them of their dignity and make their lives miserable."

People are not junk. They are valuable beings created in the image of God. All people!

Regardless of how difficult a relationship may be, you must persist because people matter and relationships matter. Dr. Martin Luther King writes: "In a real sense all life is inter-related. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be...this is the inter-related structure of reality."

When it comes to people, out of sight does not necessarily mean out of mind. Stuffing is never the path to relational success. Have you noticed that people tend to crawl out of the "drawers" we stuff them into? Oppressed (stuffed) peoples will fight back and be heard, such is the strength of the human spirit that it chips away at those hard to open drawers, shedding light into their corners and releasing our darkest impulses. Ignoring a problem or not being honest with someone doesn't solve anything.

It might be easier to ignore people who bother or frighten us, but that's not the path to personal or relational health. Relationships are work! Living with each other is hard; history supports that fact, just look around.

Go ahead, open your junk drawer and face what you're avoiding. Stop hiding or running from what you think will hurt you. It's only an illusion, a misplaced belief. Don't put off until tomorrow what is best dealt with today.

Be what you ought to be so that we can all be what we are all meant to be...God's cherished children, dancing together in the light of our common humanity.

Live well, live blessed, leave the light on, the drawer open, and welcome home your better angels.

Deacon Ed+

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>





Forward Today: Opening up our prayers

February 15, 2023 [Forward Today](#), [scott gunn](#)

Dear friends in Christ,



Some time ago, I was convicted by the teaching of Jesus we read in Matthew 5:43-45:

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.’”

I’ve never really been persecuted in a serious way, and I don’t think of myself as having enemies. But Jesus’ teaching made me reflect on who I was praying for. So I decided to open up my prayer list.

Photo by [Jametlene Reskp](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Every day, I say morning and evening prayer. Near the end of the daily office, there is a place to add our own intercessions to the prayers offered in the liturgy. I now pray and give thanks in four categories:

- Friends
- Enemies
- Strangers
- Thanksgiving

Most of the time, I had found myself praying for friends, for people I know or particularly care about. There’s nothing wrong with that! But I decided to add “enemies” to my prayer list. As I said, I don’t really have declared enemies, but I pray for people I don’t like, people I’m afraid of, and people who might wish me harm. My list includes regular people, politicians, and others.

A few weeks ago, I added “strangers” to my list. These are people I might have met on the street or in a shop, people whose names and stories I don’t really know, but who might need prayers. On cold nights, I pray for people who must sleep outside.

Lastly, over the last few months, I also realized I didn’t have a formal practice of offering thanks to God for the many blessings of this life. So I added this to my prayers. It’s already strengthened my life to remember twice each day all the ways that God has blessed me or blessed others in my sight.

No doubt my prayer list will continue to evolve over time. But I wanted to pass my current practice along, in case it’s helpful in your life of prayer. If you don’t have a daily prayer practice, it’s never too late to start. You can just think of one or more of the categories on my list and pray in the shower, on a walk, on your commute to work, or in a quiet moment of your day.

Let us pray.

Yours faithfully,

Scott Gunn, Executive Director

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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MAY 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall Men's Group Luncheon Nano Café Noon—RSVP to Fr. Michael	2 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	3	4 9:30am—11am Confirmation Class/Rectors Office
5 8am <u>Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am <u>Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	6 8:15am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group	7 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	8 8:15am-9-45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	9 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	10	11 9:30am—11am Confirmation Class/Rectors Office
12 <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> ASCENSION SUNDAY Mother's Day </div> 9:30am <u>Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	13 8:15am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	14 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	15 8:15am-9-45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	16 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	17	18 9:30am—11am Confirmation Class/Rectors Office
19 <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> PENTECOST </div> 8am <u>Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am <u>Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	20 8:15am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	21 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets Noon Clericus Mtg Location TBD 7pm Vestry Meeting/Hall	22 8:15am-9-45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	23 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	24	25 Music Recital 6pm—8:30pm Hall Private
26 8am <u>Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:15am <u>Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	27 <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Memorial Day—Parish Office Closed </div> 8:30am Yoga/Hall	28 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	29 8:15am-9-45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	30 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	31	