



The SPIRE 2021

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.



From the Rector

Dan Martins, Bill Hardwick, Jon Anderson, Marilyn Omernick, Karin Callihan, Robert Moon, Marianne Zahn, Allison English, Mark Bradshaw, Francisco Garcia, Tim Hartley, Tim Hamlin, Keiichi Matsumoto. These are some of the folks who have spent time at the Church of the Ascension over the years discerning their calls in our midst. Some came to us as young persons, some in mid-life, and some in their later years. Some became priests, and some discerned a call to lay ministry. One became a bishop.

Some of you have heard me frame the discernment questions like this – Do I want to do it? (“It” can be any vocation – priest, deacon, plumber, teacher, nurse...) Can I do it? (Do other people see it in me? Am I free to do it? Will it fill my soul?) Where Ascension comes in is the part of determining whether other people see the calling.

I believe Ascension has a vocation as a congregation to help people discern where God may be calling them. We have a great blend of wise lay folks, a talented staff, and, over the years, an interesting crew of diverse clergy. Soon we will be starting anew with Stephanie Herrmann. I am looking forward to walking alongside Stephanie for this phase of her journey. She joins us at the beginning of Advent.

MAB+

Stewardship Season and Making and Formally Recommitting to our Community

Stewardship season is that time when we remember the blessings we have received and formally recommit to the Church of the Ascension. Please remember to fill out your pledge card or go to the church website to give us your pledge. Your Vestry needs your pledge to complete our budget, plan our year and most of all to stay connected with you. If you have any questions please contact me or any other Vestry member.

See the pledge update on page 2

Blessings,
Gordon Tomaske, Senior Warden



OCTOBER 2021 Pledge Payment Snapshot



2020 Budget \$221,000

YTD Budget:	\$184,167
YTD Actual:	\$172,176
Difference:	\$-11,991

Meet Our New Diocesan Discerner



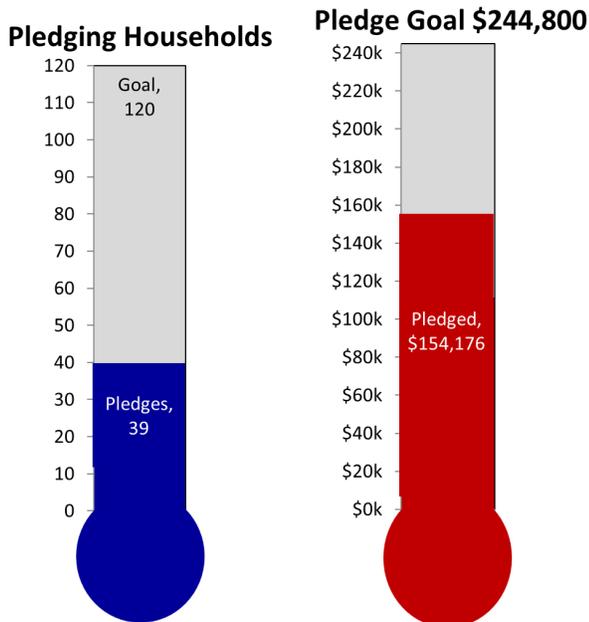
Stephanie Clifford Herrman is a lifelong Episcopalian. She began actively pursuing her call to ministry in 2015 and in May of 2021 received her Masters of Divinity from Claremont School of Theology and the Episcopal Theological School of Los Angeles. Married since 2000, Stephanie and her husband Kyle have two teenage daughters - Georgia and Catherine.

Stephanie has a strong sense of God’s healing presence in her life, a sense which has led her to work as a Pilates Instructor for the last 17 years. She is focused on reclaiming healing ministries in the Church. Stephanie has told us that she is excited to be joining Church of the Ascension- Sierra Madre during her discernment process year.

"Go out into this tired and hurting world with strength and gladness for there are deeds of courage and compassion that won't be done unless you do them and there are words of hope and healing that won't be spoken unless you speak them." - Frederick Buechner

2022 Pledge Update

The numbers as of October 29, 2021



First Wednesdays Lunch Group

Resuming November 3rd, the men of the congregation are invited to join together for lunch and fellowship.

We'll gather the first Wednesday of the month at Noon for a start and see how it goes.

Our first gathering will be at the Only Place in Town. Please let the Rector know if you plan on attending so that space can be reserved for you.

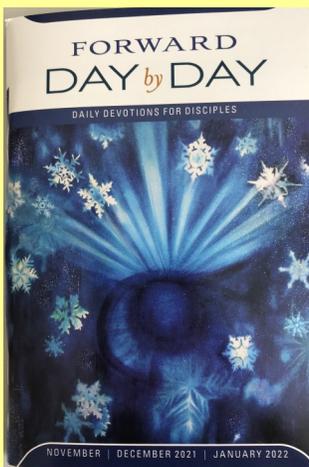


An Opportunity for Giving

Please consider making a contribution to our music program for the special music we enjoy here at Ascension.

Donation envelopes are available at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

For names to be included in the Christmas bulletins, donations must be received by Sunday, December 15th.



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 requested.

All Ages Sunday School meets weekly!

We gather at the front door of the church and depart for outdoor class time at 10:15 AM.

Students return to worship for Communion.



Mark Your Calendar for Sunday School Faith In Action Sundays!

November 14

Women's Room Thanksgiving Care Bags

December 12

Christmas Decorations & Toy Drive

A Note on Financial Stewardship

You know that your financial pledge is essential to keeping the Church of the Ascension supportive and strong. It allows us to budget for the coming year and helps us determine our priorities. But you may not be aware of the many ways you can provide financial support to our parish. First off, you should be getting a pledge card in the mail or you can pick one up at church. Return the card to us in the offering plate at one of the services or drop it off at the parish office. You can also make your pledge on the parish website by going to <https://www.ascension-sierramadre.com/give.html>.

When fulfilling your pledge by check or cash, make sure your name and envelope/account number are clearly marked. To get your offering to church you can:

- ◇ Drop an envelope with cash or a check into the offering plate during the service
- ◇ Call the office and drop a donation off with Kim Lumino at any time during the week (except Wednesdays)
- ◇ Arrange on your bank's website for Ascension to receive automatic payments from your checking or savings account in the amount you designate. Simply add "Church of the Ascension, 25 E. Laurel Avenue, Sierra Madre, CA 91024" as an automatic payee in the amount and frequency you choose. When prompted for an account number, you can use your Ascension envelope/account number.
- ◇ Make your pledge online via the parish website at <https://ascension-sierramadre.com/give.html>.



SO MANY OPTIONS
FOR GIVING!



In addition, you can donate outside of your pledge by donating:

- ◇ A financial gift to support a parish project like the roof replacement or other maintenance
- ◇ Appreciated Stock. If you have appreciated stock, you may donate that to the parish and get a tax deduction while avoiding capital gains. Check with the parish office for more information and your accountant for details on the tax implications
- ◇ A car. Over the last few years, Ascension has accepted cars as donations with approximately 70% of the proceeds going to the church. Call the parish office for details
- ◇ Planned giving. When creating your will or trust, please remember your parish family in your arrangements.

From all of us at Ascension, thank you for your time, talent, and treasure. God's peace.

A Message from St. Anne's Altar Guild ~ Christmas Flowers



While it may only be late October, we are looking ahead to Christmas. This year we will come back to a Grand Celebration in the Sanctuary. As with everything, the price for garlands, wreaths, and poinsettias has risen considerably. On average, the cost is \$2000 to decorate the church. We are counting on the generous contributions from all of the Parish to make this a truly glorious celebration of our Lord's birth. **(checks should be made payable to Church of the Ascension, marked for Christmas)**

Thank you, Lynne Holl

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 at the back of the church.

****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. Click on the links below to sign-up.

Sanctuary Candles: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0e44a4a628a7f94-sanctuary>

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





This past summer, I studied with Dr. Chan Helman who is internationally renowned for his work on building a hope centered response to trauma. Hope is the idea that we are pursuing goals in our lives. Helman says: “The question is whether or not we have the strategies, or pathways, to achieve those goals and if we're able to generate the motivation and persistence to pursue them.”

One of the most traumatized groups of people among us are the “unhoused.” California's homeless number rose to 17% in 2021 compared to 2019. Los Angeles County and the City of Los Angeles also saw an increase in homelessness by 12.7% and 16.1% individually compared to 2019. The saddest fact is that large parts of this population are elderly women and mothers with small children.

The restoration of Hope to the broken and most vulnerable among us doesn't happen in a vacuum. It happens in community; it happens when we as Christians are willing to meet our broken brothers and sisters where they are and without judgement. It also begins with losing the attitude “not in my neighborhood.”



Recently I toured the about to be opened **Tiny Home Village** along the Arroyo adjacent to the 110 freeway at Avenue 60 in my neighborhood, Highland Park. The Village sponsored by **Hope of the Valley Rescue Mission** offers interim housing and a multitude of services throughout L.A. County. Tiny Homes Arroyo Seco has 117 units and 224 beds. Each home is 64 sq. ft., has 2 beds, heat, air-conditioning, windows, a small desk, and a front door. Throughout the County, there are a total of 387 units and 649 beds with more villages being planned. Each village provides showers, personal storage, laundry facilities, hot meals, job assistance, medical and mental health referrals, housing support, case management and more. In just 3-6 months, residents are placed in permanent housing. Funding comes entirely from the City, County, fundraising, and grants. It's my hope to offer pastoral care at the Arroyo Village as a volunteer.

If you're interested in more information, see hopeofthevalley.org In the meantime, here's a prayer that I say every day. I invite you to join me:

“Give us attentive hearts,”
Jean Vanier

Lord, give us attentive,
humble and gentle hearts
to welcome with tenderness and compassion
all the poor you send to us.

Give us hearts full of mercy
to love them, to serve them,
to extinguish all discord
and to see in our suffering and broken brothers and sisters
the presence of the living Jesus.

Lord, bless us with the hands of your poor.
Lord, smile at us in the eyes of your poor.
Lord, you receive us one day
in the happy company of your poor.

Be well, be blessed, remember in God's eyes we are all poor.
Deacon Ed



How the Pandemic Changed Us

October 6, 2021 By [Allison Sandlin Liles](#)

A couple of weeks ago a teacher friend shared this image from @WeAreTeachers in her Instagram stories.

I spent at least an hour thinking of things in our family's life that are the same now as they were prior to March 2020. Aside from our tradition of creating and completing a Summer Fun List, I seriously couldn't think of anything.

At dinner that night, I asked our kids if they could remember their last grade before the pandemic entered our lives. Our seventh grade son did the math and realized it was way back in fourth grade, just as the @WeAreTeachers image showed. Our fifth grader knew then that it meant that her last 'normal' year was second grade, but then stated it wasn't really all that normal because her teacher unexpectedly died that year.

The last normal school year

...for students in...	was
Grade 7	Grade 4
Grade 6	Grade 3
Grade 5	Grade 2
Grade 4	Grade 1
Grade 3	Kindergarten
Grade 2	never
Grade 1	never
Kindergarten	never

@weareteachers

So, I asked, what in our lives now is the same as it was pre-pandemic? We thought of so many aspects of our life together.

Church? Nope.
 School drop off? Nope.
 Shopping? Nope.
 Sports? Nope.
 Walking the dogs? Nope.
 Family vacations? Nope.
 Playdates, holidays, seeing extended family? Nope, nope, nope.

And then, with all the hope of a toddler who answers "JESUS!" to every question asked in a children's sermon, our daughter said, "Our love for one another?"

That's it, dear, our love for one another is the same as it was before the pandemic.

Our conversation transitioned to something else entirely different and that was that. Then the next day, another friend shared the image on Instagram. And then another a few days later. I couldn't stop thinking about it and about our daughter's saccharine answer. Of course we continue loving each other, but it doesn't feel the same as it did pre-pandemic. Our way of being together has evolved over the past 19 months, and the love we share has as well.

Pre-pandemic, we didn't spend all that much time together as a family unit during the school year. We crossed paths before work and school, and then ate dinner most nights as a family. We often gathered in the living room for Friday family movie nights, then over weekends, my husband and I tag-teamed parenting so we could finish sermons or enjoy a bit of solitude. Our time together felt intentional and we made the most of it.

A few months into the pandemic, we finally realized that we were *always* together. All meals eaten together. All hikes taken together. All movies watched together. All yard work tackled together. Then slowly, we began physically distancing within our house. Our daughter began spending more time playing Minecraft with out-of-town friends in her room. Our son started closing his door for the first time in his life, craving privacy while he listened to podcasts or read or knit or did anything that allowed him to be on his own. And my husband and I automatically drifted to opposite ends of the house to work, clean, read, create, play, or nap alone.

Our love is not the same as it was 19 months ago, and it's meant learning to receive and show love in new ways.

For our pre-teen, it means listening to try and understand the world he created in Minecraft. It means taping notes and prayers on his bathroom mirror because he's too embarrassed having them in his lunch box, and thanking him for spending time with us when pre-pandemic it simply would have been expected of him.

For our fifth grader it means reading aloud to her at night again and watching her favorite shows on Netflix without offering a running commentary about gender roles and stereotypical behaviors. It means helping her work through big feelings in new, indirect ways like taping butcher paper on the table with a bucket of markers, and writing prompts, then walking away.

For my husband, it means *actually* spending time with him. Eating dinner together after the kids finish, walking the dogs together, or sharing a couch while engaging in different activities.

The pandemic teaches us to love one another in ways that feel less self-satisfying. We are more likely to offer the things that our family members need, rather than offering only what we want to give. In a sense, it feels like we are learning to love more like God.

What has stayed the same for you during the pandemic?

How has love evolved within your household.

THANKSGIVING

FOR EACH NEW MORNING WITH ITS LIGHT,
 FOR REST AND SHELTER OF THE NIGHT,
 FOR HEALTH AND FOOD,
 FOR LOVE AND FRIENDS,
 FOR EVERYTHING
 THY
 GOODNESS SENDS.
 -RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

**13th Annual Women's Room Thanksgiving Luncheon**

We are excited to be preparing for our annual Thanksgiving Luncheon for The Women's Room at Friends in Deed. Due to continued Covid precautions, we will again only be providing lunch for the regular guests at TWR and expect a maximum of 20 guests throughout the day.

The luncheon will be on Monday, November 22 this year. Hot, prepared food can be delivered to the Ascension kitchen between 10-11am that morning. We will only need one or two volunteers to help load up the car at Ascension--the volunteers at TWR will be available to unload.

We also hope to provide a gift-bag for each guest. Ideas for gifts include small personal-care items (make-up, nail polish, lotion), small warm clothing items (socks, gloves, hats), other small gifts (journals, markers, fidget cubes). Elizabeth Callihan has kindly volunteered to help coordinate/construct the bags. If you are interested in helping with this effort, please sign up on the sign-up sheet (include your email and phone number) and she will contact you directly.

The women have been buzzing about the luncheon already this year. We can't wait to provide them with this joy this holiday season.

Please contact Nicole Hanson if you have any questions. nhanson123@gmail.com, 626-627-4681.

Sign up here: <https://bit.ly/3vffZ1k>

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

November begins with the celebration of All Saints' on the 7th. The choir will be presenting *Give Us the Wings of Faith* by Richard Shephard, a British composer who departed this life on February 20. One of the hymns for the day will be DARWALL'S 148TH (#625 should you wish to look it up), *Ye Holy Angels Bright*. The closing voluntary will be a wonderful setting of DARWALL'S 148TH by Percy Whitlock, another Brit who lived from 1903 to 1946.

On November 14 the choir will be singing *Fear Not, O Land* by William H. Harris (1883-1973), who was considered one of the most important figures in English Church music of the twentieth century.

On November 21 the liturgical year culminates with Christ the King Sunday, which will be recognized by the choir's presentation of *O God, Beyond All Praising*, arranged by Richard Proulx (American composer, 1937-2010). This anthem is based on the hymn tune THAXTED, a stately theme composed by Englishman Gustav Theodore Holst (1874-1934) and featured in the *Jupiter* movement of *The Planets*.

Hark the Glad Sound by David Thorne (British composer, b. 1950) will be sung on November 28, the first Sunday of Advent. Johann Sebastian Bach's *Wachet Auf* will be featured as the opening voluntary as well as the closing hymn.

*How shall I sing that Majesty which angels do admire?
 Let dust in dust and silence lie; sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.
 Thousands of thousands stand around Thy throne, O God most high;
 Ten thousand times ten thousand sound Thy praise; but who am I?*

*Thy brightness unto them appears, whilst I Thy footsteps trace;
 A sound of God comes to my ears, but they behold Thy face.
 They sing because Thou art their Sun; Lord, send a beam on me;
 For where heaven is but once begun there alleluias be.*

~John Mason



Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist



We cordially invite you to our Private Holiday Shopping Party

Date: Saturday, November 20

Time: 6:00 p.m.

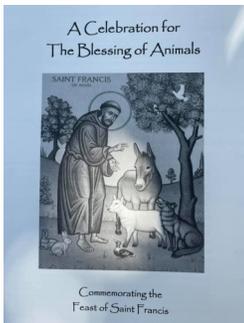
Where: Savor the Flavor LLC, 11 Kersting Court, Sierra Madre, CA 91024

Come learn about all the hot new food and gift trends of this year and enjoy some champagne, wine, hors d'oeuvres and decadent desserts. This is the time to get a start to your holiday shopping with all the personal attention you'll need. Savor the Flavor will be donating 10% of sales from this evening to Church of the Ascension. Please R.S.V.P. by November 10 to The Ascension Office or to Jean Rowe at jeanrowe@verizon.net or 626-355-5432.



****Considering that all of us are still trying to be careful with Covid 19, Savor the Flavor is asking us to follow their guidelines about food and drink consumed at the Party. If everyone in our group is vaccinated, we can remove masks and have wine and food served. To Honor this request, we will be asking all participating folks to bring proof of vaccination.**

Our party will begin at 6:00pm on November 20th. Please remember to arrive on time. All guests need to be over the age of 21, so no children please.**



**Sunday,
October 3, 2021**

Blessing of the Animals

**Thank You to Dan and Nicole
Hanson for the pictures!**



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

NOVEMBER 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 8:30am Yoga/Hall Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group	2 11am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel 12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall	3 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall Men's Group Luncheon @ Noon	4 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 11:30am-Deanery Mtg/Hall 1:10pm Gooden Chapel 2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal	5 10:30am Staff Mtg	6
7 All Saints Day 8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	8 8:30am Yoga/Hall 1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall	9 11am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel 12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall	10 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	11 9am Rector's Forum 2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal VETERAN'S DAY OFFICE CLOSED	12	13 Diocesan Convention
14 8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* Youth Group-Women's Rm Thanksgiving Care Bags	15 8:30am Yoga/Hall 1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall	16 11am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel 12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 7:30pm Vestry Meeting Hall	17 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	18 9am Rector's Forum 1:10pm Gooden Chapel 2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal	19	20 Holiday Shopping Party at Savor the Flavor 6pm RSVP to Jean Rowe Required
Father Michael Out of Town/Vacation						
21 8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	22 8:30am Yoga/Hall 13th Annual Women's Room Thanksgiving Luncheon-Offsite (see page 6 for details)	23	24 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	25 Thanksgiving Day Mass at 9am 	26	27
28 1st Sunday of Advent 8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	29 8:30am Yoga/Hall 1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall	30 11am Gooden Chapel 1:15pm Gooden Chapel 12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall				