



The SPIRE

The Newsletter of the
Episcopal Church of the Ascension,
Sierra Madre, California



October 2019

Upcoming Events

October 15th – 7pm/Hall
Vestry Meeting

October 20th – Noon/Library
Parish Ministry Council Meeting

From the Rector

Because we live in Southern California and because we are Christians – and of the Episcopal flavor at that – we live in a weird tension of multiple realities whether we like it or not. Everywhere we turn, we are faced with differences – our neighbors often look different from us, we hear many languages in the course of our day, and some of us speak more than one language. We cross cultural lines all the time, not to mention the political differences we experience. We are Christian people with a set of core values that we have inherited from the generations before us, but we are constantly in the presence of people from other faith traditions and a growing number of people with no faith tradition. And yet we often wish that everyone could be like us --- or at least think the way we do.

It is strange that the more differences we encounter, the more homogenous we wish our world, or at least our little part of it, could be. Christendom as a whole, the Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Los Angeles, our own parish, and even some of our households are struggling with this tension of realities. I'm sure our bishops from LA might well have been wishing that everyone thought as they do while they were meeting with the other bishops recently in Minneapolis.

It is hard to really engage differences, especially when they involve beliefs that we consider central to our understanding of reality. At times it is hard to believe that there could be any sort of common ground, and the word compromise sometimes seems to have a really bitter taste to it. So what are the virtues that we are to be praying for God to give us in these times?

Patience and humility immediately come to mind; but I believe that now more than ever we should be asking for faith, hope, and love. We must trust that God is with us, that God's desire is our future, and that God's love for us will enable us to reach out in love across the very real differences we encounter constantly.

MAB+

Women's Room
Thanksgiving
Luncheon

Monday,
November 25

Daylight Savings Ends on
Sunday, November 3.

Blessing of the Animals



Sunday, October 6

11:45am in the Outdoor Worship Area

Blessing of the Animals is conducted in commemoration of the October 4th Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis, arguably the most beloved of the named Saints, was particularly fond of animals of all breeds. The community is invited to bring your animals, no matter how big or small, breed or religion. Some animals may require a leash or a container, so keep that in mind.



All of God's creatures are welcome!



September Pledge Payment Snapshot



2019 Budget \$220,881

YTD Budget: \$165,661

YTD Actual: \$155,942

Difference: \$-9,719

Ascension Stewardship Campaign 2020

Telling Our Story

Dear Parishioners:

Throughout history, God has sustained and grown the church through the faith of his people living in communities of devotion. How our faith has nurtured us individually, sustained us collectively, and strengthened us for service to our community is the story of Ascension; and it is these precious stories of love and faith that we give to each generation that succeeds us. During this stewardship season, we will share our stories of faith and community so that the generations to come may understand and celebrate what God has already done for us.

As Christians, we are asked to give and give generously from what God has already given us. Let us use this stewardship season to celebrate our church's rich history so that when we do give, we do so thankfully in the knowledge of how generous God has already been to us. Please fill out your pledge card offering your time, your talent, and your treasure; and, most of all, join us in Telling Our Story.

Thank you,
Gordon Tomaske,
Sr. Warden, Church of the Ascension

Our story



Put Saturday, November 23rd on your Calendar!

Plan to join Ascension's annual **Shop till you Drop Event** at Sierra Madre's own Savor the Flavor store.

- Pick up specialty food items for Thanksgiving.
- Get a head start on your Christmas shopping.
- Sip wine and taste award winning food items.
- Ascension will get a percentage for each purchase we make.

Feel free to invite your neighbors to join us at this local event.





“Silence is not merely negative – a pause between words, a temporary cessation of speech, but properly understood, it is highly positive; an attitude of attentive alertness, of vigilance, and above all of listening.” (Bishop Kallistos Ware)

Autumn will always be my favorite season. After 39 years in Los Angeles, I've learned that if I look closely and smell discretely, there is indeed a change of seasons. The days are warm, cool breezes begin to envelop the night, the hum of air conditioners fades, and the crickets take their leave. But why am I conflicted and hesitant to embrace this favorite season?

My soul longs for something more. I'm not ready to let go of hot sultry summer evenings when the air is heavy and still, accented only by the sounds of crickets, children playing in the distance, and my dogs lying quietly on the front porch happy that the cool Spanish tiles bring a little relief. On nights like this, my imagination wanders, old memories dancing about, but mostly it's about the silence.

I wonder what God thinks about on nights like this? I suspect God likes hot and sultry nights too. Maybe he's sitting on his fire escape in his boxers and tank top enjoying a cold beer and listening to the sounds of silence. I wonder who might be sharing the silence with him. I wonder whose eyes he might be gazing into, who is gently holding his hand. Is that the radio faintly playing in the background? Is that God's favorite song, the one that always reminds him of his first summer love?

There really isn't much of a conversation on the fire escape tonight. It's hot and sultry. The lovers alert, vigilant, and above all listening. They're not afraid to flirt with each other and the silence.

So why are we so afraid to climb out the window onto the fire escape? Is sitting across from God in his boxers, tank top and sharing a cold beer a little too much for us?

That's the point isn't it.... if we're not listening vigilantly, lingering in the pauses between the words, then we're not going to hear the invitation to join God on the fire escape. If we're not willing to listen, how are we ever going to know that he is inviting us into intimacy with him? Umm, sharing a cold one with God.... It takes a hot summer's night.

Live well, live blessed, listen vigilantly. Deacon Ed+

Diocesan Discerner: Tim Hamlin

I was born and raised in New York City in the uptown Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights. I grew up attending St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Manhattan where I was baptized and confirmed. I went to Pitzer College in Claremont, CA and graduated in 2012. Though I attended school across country, Southern California was not unfamiliar as I grew up in San Marino and I have a lot of family still in the Pasadena area. After graduating school, I worked as a nanny in NYC, did a bit of traveling, and spent time with the Episcopal Order of the Holy Cross in Westpark, NY.

In the fall of 2015, I moved to Grahamstown, South Africa to serve as a missionary with the Young Adult Service Corps under the auspices of the Episcopal Church. I lived with monks in a small rural monastery and helped out at the primary school that they operated for local farm children. After finishing my time in SA, I moved to Los Angeles to be with my girlfriend (now fiancée) Henley, whom I had met in NYC and who had moved to LA when I started my mission year. We found an apartment in Echo Park and I found a church, St. Mary's Mariposa, in Koreatown. I began working for a non-profit that did workforce development before transitioning to another job at an organization called Brilliant Corners that helps provide housing services to the formerly homeless. When I'm not working or at church, I like to read, go to the beach, go on hikes, and spend time with my Little Brother (as part of Big Brother Big Sister mentoring program).



TRICK OR TREATING @ ASCENSION



Halloween Candy Donations are Needed

**Please drop off
Individually wrapped
candy to Ascension by
October 28th!**



On Saturday, October 26th, we will be screening The Fog, one of the iconic movies filmed at Ascension shot on location by acclaimed horror director John Carpenter in 1980.

Our goal is to provide a community outreach activity that invites our neighbors to enjoy Ascension's historic, artistic, and architectural significance and to provide an opportunity for entertainment and socializing.

There will be two screenings, one at 6pm and another at 8pm. Because seating is limited, we ask that any parishioners who wish to attend to please sign up ahead of time. We will also need about ten volunteers to serve as ushers, concession stand operators, and setup/clean-up crew.

Contact Chris Bamberger with any questions.

Do you have any extra Christmas cards??

Please bring them to Church. We need 200 Christmas cards before mid-November.

Cards will be distributed to the guests at the Women's Room Thanksgiving Luncheon.



NOTES FROM THE LOFT

By October we've all settled into our fall routines ~ this includes our Ascension choristers, who regularly meet for rehearsals on Thursday evenings and sing for the Sunday 10:15 services. It's truly a joy and privilege for us to make music unto the Lord! October anthems include:

6 – *Write Your Blessed Name* by American K. Lee Scott and Mendelssohn's lush *Lord In Thy Mercy*;

13 – *O For A Heart to Praise My God* by contemporary American Robert J. Powell, coupled with John Rutter's *Thy Perfect Love*;

20 – Ralph Vaughan Williams' (British) *O How Amiable* and John Rutter's beloved *A Gaelic Blessing*;

27 - The festive *Nicae Te Deum* by American Robert Turner and, during communion, *Lord, For Thy Tender Mercy's Sake* by sixteenth century English composer Richard Farrant. Turner's setting of the *Te Deum* integrates the hymn tune *Nicaea (Holy, Holy, Holy)* and includes congregational participation.

You'll want to mark your calendars for two future dates:

Sunday morning, November 3. During the 10:15 service Gabriel Fauré's exquisite *Requiem* will be incorporated into the mass, sung by an enhanced choir and soloists. You won't want to miss this unique service of worship!

Saturday evening, December 14, 7 p.m.. Sierra Madre Music's AlmaNova Duo, Jessica Pierce and Almer Imamovic, will present a concert of Christmas music. The program will benefit both Ascension and Sierra Madre Music ~ so plan on attending, enjoying some wonderful music, and supporting the church as well as a worthy community organization.

*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.

~Alfred V. Fedak

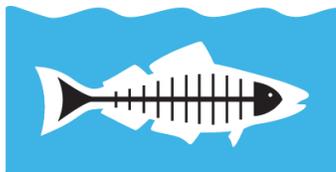


Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

FALL KICK-OFF PICNIC POTLUCK & PARTY Sunday, September 8

Thank You to Nicole Hanson for Organizing!

Thank You to
Jon Prentice and
Dan Hanson for
the pictures!



Heal the Bay

HEAL THE BAY—COASTAL CLEAN-UP DAY

Ascension volunteers attended the Heal the Bay cleanup event on **Saturday morning September 21st**. We hauled in 25 pounds of trash, including a pair of headphones, a few tennis balls, and mostly plastic bags and wrappers at the Arroyo Seco near the Rose Bowl. Thanks to several of Gooden's 7th graders for participating!

Thank You
to Scott
Callihan for
Organizing!





THE ANGLICAN ALLIANCE AND EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT: WORKING TOGETHER FOR LASTING CHANGE IN TIMES OF DISASTER

We have all been shocked and saddened by the terrible devastation [Hurricane Dorian](#) visited upon the Bahamas. The death toll is likely to continue to rise. The destruction is heartbreaking.



Participants in the Anglican Alliance gather in Myanmar for a workshop in 2019.

In times like this, I try to remind myself that the road to recovery is hard and long but with the right support, approach and commitment it is possible. Our ability to coordinate and leverage our relationships across the Anglican Communion give us more flexibility and a wider reach.

For instance, our response to Dorian in the Bahamas is underway in collaboration with the Anglican Alliance. Some of our friends and supporters are curious about the [Alliance](#) and how it relates to our work in the Bahamas.

Since I was present at the creation of the Anglican Alliance, I thought it might be helpful to explain the role the Alliance plays in Episcopal Relief & Development's international disaster response.

By way of background, the Anglican Alliance grew out of a call by the bishops of the Anglican Communion at the Lambeth Conference of 2008 for greater collaboration and cooperation across the Communion when it comes to responding to disasters. A number of bishops expressed frustration that there was no one Communion-wide point of contact they could call on in times of disaster. As a result, the Archbishop of Canterbury convened a design team, of which I was a part, to address this concern. The Anglican Alliance was established to respond to this call.

It's important to know that the Alliance is not and was never envisioned to be an international relief and development agency. It does not collect or disburse funding. The Anglican Communion already has a number of excellent agencies that do that kind of work. Indeed, many Provinces of the Communion have departments or stand-alone agencies much like Episcopal Relief & Development.

What was sorely lacking, however, was a way for us all to collaborate and coordinate in times of disaster.



Anglican Alliance Design Team pictured with the 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, in 2011. Source: <http://bit.ly/31xeH2b>

Perhaps it goes without saying, but disasters produce chaos.

In times of disaster and with all the best of intentions in the world, people mobilize and seek to assist the local diocese where a disaster occurs, much as we are doing for the Bahamas. In the past, this sometimes led to further chaos—multiple reporting requirements, miscommunication about needs, double funding of some needs and critical gaps in other places. It became clear that we were just creating more confusion and heavier burdens on Church partners already overwhelmed by the disaster itself.

So, here's where the Anglican Alliance comes into the picture.

Continued on next page...

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster the Alliance convenes all of the major players working on relief and development across the Communion to address the disaster in a collaborative and coordinated way. The impacted diocese has one point of contact at the Alliance (rather than multiple points of contact around the world) and works with a support team to create a comprehensive proposal that addresses the most urgent priorities as much as possible.

The agencies and others who want to help, then take that proposal, and cooperate to fund it to the extent we can. Episcopal Relief & Development focuses on funding humanitarian needs while others may focus on funding church infrastructure needs.

Often there is a lead agency to oversee the response and foster collaboration with other Anglican agencies. In the case of the Bahamas, Episcopal Relief & Development is likely to be the lead agency, given our proximity to the Bahamas and our experience.

Episcopal Relief & Development will also support the deployment of one of our Partners in Resilience and Response (someone from elsewhere in the Communion, in this case from within the region, who through experience and training is equipped in disaster management) to the Bahamas to help the diocese develop its strategy. This is a new aspect of our international disaster response and we hope that it will help the diocese serve the needs of the most vulnerable more effectively and efficiently.

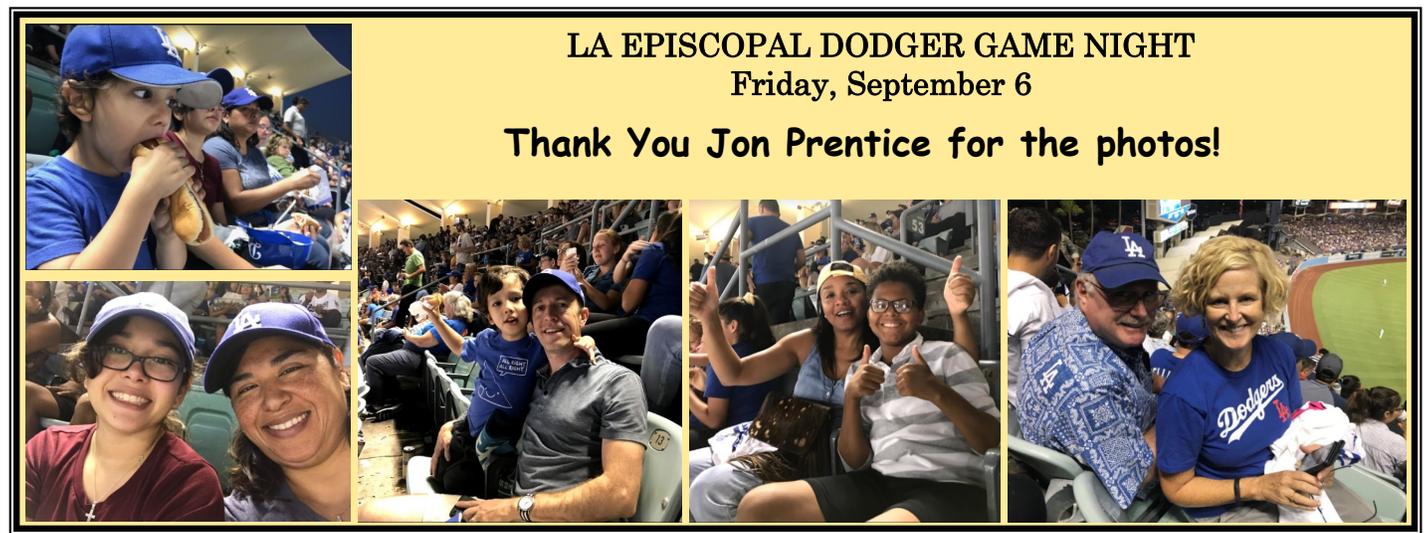
It has been invaluable to have the Alliance as the single point of contact and as a platform for collaboration in the Anglican Communion at these difficult times. The Alliance helps to clarify communication and identify needs quickly so that we can all do what we want to do: help those most in need.

The Anglican Alliance may not be one of the official instruments of unity in the Anglican Communion, but is sure feels like that when the chips are down.



Rob Radtke is the President & CEO of Episcopal Relief & Development

Link to Article: <https://www.episcopalrelief.org/stories/the-anglican-alliance-and-episcopal-relief-development-working-together-for-lasting-change-in-times-of-disaster/>



LA EPISCOPAL DODGER GAME NIGHT

Friday, September 6

Thank You 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

OCTOBER 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 10am Prayer in the Library	2 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	3 8:15am—Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 3pm- 6pm-Organist Rehearsal/Church 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal/Hall	4	5
Fr. Bamberger Out of Office / NC for GOE's						
6 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS 11:45AM	7 8:15am—Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel 9am—Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel Fr. Bamberger Out of Office / Clergy Support Group	8 10am Prayer in the Library	9 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	10 7am Mass 8:15am—Gooden Chapel 10:15am Staff Mtg 9am Forum 3pm- 6pm-Organist Rehearsal/Church 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal/Hall	11	12
13 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass MCGUFFIE BAPTISM 10:15 SERVICE	14 8:15am—Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel 9am—Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm	15 10am Prayer in the Library Daisy Troop Meeting Church 4pm-5:30pm Vestry Mtg Hall/7pm	16 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	17 7am Mass 8:15am—Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 3pm- 6pm-Organist Rehearsal/Church 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal/Hall	18	19 Funeral/ Robert Thistlewhite Private Church 10:00am
20 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass Noon—PMC Mtg/Library	21 8:15am—Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel 9am—Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel	22 10am Prayer in the Library	23 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	24 7am Mass 8:15am—Gooden Chapel 10:15am Staff Mtg 9am Forum 3pm- 6pm-Organist Rehearsal/Church 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal/Hall	25	26
27 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass	28 8:15am—Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel 9am—Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm	29 10am Prayer in the Library	30 8:45am—1:30pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	31 7am Mass 8:15am—Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 3pm- 6pm-Organist Rehearsal/Church 7:30pm—Choir Rehearsal/Hall		