

The SPIRE 2018

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



Upcoming Events

September 9th—
Fall Kick-off
potluck after each service

September 18th –
7:00pm/Hall - Vestry Meeting

September 23rd—
Noon/Library
Parish Ministry Council Mtg

ALL PARISH RETREAT

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

We are so excited to announce our first (at least in a long time!) All Parish Retreat. We're keeping it simple (and FREE) this year by hosting it on our own grounds. We'll gather from morning to night--playing, learning, discerning, worshipping--all meals included. Parishioners of ALL ages and all levels of involvement are welcome.

Please mark the date on your calendars and plan to be part of this new tradition at Ascension. More details will be forthcoming!
Stay tuned!

Pledge Payment Snapshot-August

2018 Budget Amount:
\$211,001

YTD Budget: \$140,667
YTD Actual: \$152,573
Difference: \$+11,906



Pledging **WHY WE GIVE** Love & Earthquake Insurance

Most pledge to Ascension without hesitation or deep analysis. We know it to be a good and right thing, and that is sufficient. At pledge time, it is nonetheless good to remember why we give.

Each of us probably articulates the answer to that question slightly differently. Some of us cite specific programs that best reflect our spiritual and social priorities. Others reflect on the sense of community or individual emotional and spiritual voids our faith and church fill. There is, however, a unifying idea that is found in Bishop Curry's encompassing rendition of what it means to be Christian. Simply stated, "If it is not about Love, it is not about God."

Father Bamberger often reminds us that "the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference." Riffing off Bishop Curry in a recent sermon, Father preached a variation on the theme saying, "the opposite of love is not hate, but self-centeredness." When we practice our faith, we do so when we provide abundance so that all can share in the gifts of life. In other words, providing abundance is perhaps the quintessential human expression of God's love. When we give, we certainly provide support for the spiritual nourishment each of us seeks and needs; but in doing so, we provide just as much, if not more, for others. Church ministries, in all forms, provide succor and comfort for the many.

It is useful then to think of the specific programs, people, and facilities we support in broader and deeper terms than the individual line items they represent in the parish budget. An example might be last year's critical moment when the Vestry was trying to decide whether to discontinue earthquake insurance because budget forecasts made keeping it beyond our reach. Thankfully a late surge in pledges -doubtless from many who responded to that specific need perhaps remembering the 1991 earthquake that nearly took our beautiful home from us – saved us from making that harsh decision. We hope this year the "surge" comes early, saving us from that fateful kind of choice and making our budget planning better. That insurance need can be seen as practical and financial; and it is, of course, both those things. But when we think of preserving our home so it is there to provide care and comfort for anyone who walks through its doors or who takes comfort simply knowing that a house of God is there for them in good times and bad, we can see that even paying for earthquake insurance is about love. It is about God.

There are more obvious examples of our financial goals creating abundance for others. Providing pension benefits for our parish administrator and fully recovering our commitment to the Mission Share Fund are but two. We hope this year's pledges will be sufficiently plentiful to advance those objectives as well.

Pledge cards are coming soon. In fact, some of you may have your card by the time you get to reading this article. When you receive the pledge packet, think about the particular reason that animates your decision to give. But also know that our pledges are ultimately about God's love for us all. **The Vestry**

FALL KICK-OFF PARTY & POTLUCK
NEXT SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

see page 3 for details

From the Rector



With the funeral services of Senator John McCain, many eyes will once again be focused upon the National Cathedral – also known as the Cathedral Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.

I remember first visiting there as a child while it was still very much under construction. (The National Cathedral wasn't completed until 1990 – 83 years after the cornerstone was laid.) Billed as “a House of Prayer for all people,” the Cathedral has played a prominent role in our nation's ceremonial life.

The Cathedral itself occupies a prominent place in Washington. The Right Rev. Henry Yates Satterlee, the first Episcopal

bishop of Washington, must have had vision when in 1896 the property was obtained atop Mount St. Alban's. This hilltop is one of the highest points in the District of Columbia.

Those who have visited Washington will remember two landmark buildings on the two “hills” of the skyline– The Capitol Building and the National Cathedral. Reflecting on the relationship of Church and State, I find it particularly appropriate when national leaders gather under the magnificent ceilings in the light of the beautiful stained-glass windows.

And I will be surprised if the Navy Hymn isn't sung once again.

Father Michael

Doing More

In thinking about a theme for this year's stewardship campaign and our desire to enlarge our church's footprint in our community, your Vestry has come up with the concept of Doing More.

If you are like me, you often sigh and think to yourself I should be doing more ----. You probably can immediately fill in the blank with some things that you wish that you were doing more.

Doing more fits our calling as Christians in so many ways.

As part of the Christian community, we need to be

- Doing more praying, praising, and thanking
- Doing more listening to God, to those around us, and to those with whom we don't always agree
- Doing more forgiving of other's failings and of our own
- Doing more consoling and comforting of one another
- Doing more welcoming of newcomers and reaching out to those we have not seen for a while
- Doing more reflecting about what is going on in the world, our own community, and in our own lives
- Doing more volunteering at church and in the community
- Doing more playing and laughing together
- Doing more loving of those we know and those whom we don't know
- And yes, (you knew it was coming!) Doing more Giving—Giving enables us to support the programs of our church, enables our church and the diocese to reach out to those in financial need, to the victims of disasters, to the support of the food bank, the Women's Room, Hillside, and so many other worthy organizations who work to help others.

So this month, think about where you need to be Doing More. It's a goal worth pursuing.

Jean Rowe, Sr. Warden





SAVE THE DATE!
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9
FALL-KICK-OFF

After each service on September 9, the Parish Ministry Council invites you to a **POTLUCK** to celebrate the start of the fall season. We have a lot going on this coming year, and we want to keep you all informed. Come find out what we've been up to and what we've got coming up. The paper sign-up sheet is on the Event Table in Hawks Hall. You can also sign up online through Sign-up Genius (if you did not receive the link via email, you can request it from Nicole Hanson at nhanson123@gmail.com). See you there!



“Excuse me...I’m having a senior moment.” Actually, I prefer “intellectual overload” as it seems more politically correct and doesn’t call as much attention to my age as I contemplate an upcoming birthday that ends in a zero. Oh, I know it’s just a number; and there are those who would like to convince me that 70 is the new 40; but I’m not buying it.

Last month, I talked about the importance of “elder care” law in preparing ourselves and loved ones for the future. Now, I’d like to look into the future and draw attention to a symptom of aging that has or will affect many of our families, friends, and perhaps even ourselves. Have you ever walked into a room and wondered what you were going to do there? It’s normal, but is it something more than being simply distracted? Is it natural memory loss due to aging, or is it something more?

Most of us know someone whose life has been impacted by the devastating effects of Alzheimer’s disease or age-related dementia. I’ve been thinking a lot about this as I struggle with understanding my 94 year old Aunt’s cognitive decline and wonder what’s in store for me. I thought a good place to start was understanding the difference. I found some very helpful information on the Alzheimer’s web site www.alz.org that’s worth sharing.

What are the some differences between Alzheimer’s and typical age-related changes?

Signs of Alzheimer’s and Dementia	Age-related changes
Poor judgement and decision-making	Making a bad decision once in a while
Inability to manage a budget	Missing a monthly payment
Losing track of the date or the season	Forgetting which day it is and remembering it later
Difficulty having a conversation	Sometimes forgetting which word to use
Misplacing things and being unable to retrace steps to find them	Losing things from time to time

It goes without saying that if you have any reason to be concerned about yourself or a loved one, seek professional advice.

This discussion certainly is about Real Life, but it’s about Real Faith too. It’s important to remember that “while our bodies and brains fade, God has declared that we are a new creation with a new identity.” This quote is from **Second Forgetting: Remembering the Power of the Gospel During Alzheimer’s Disease** by Dr. Benjamin Mast.

Live well, lived blessed, and know that God always remembers what we forget!
Deacon Ed+

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

On September 2, soprano Colette Ostrye will be joining me in the loft, singing Mendelssohn's *O For the Wings of a Dove* and the traditional Irish hymn, *Be Thou My Vision*.

The choir will be returning for their autumn residency on September 9. Anthems for the month include:

September 9 – *Behold Now, Praise the Lord* by Everett Titcomb – a bright, energetic call to praise by this New England composer of organ and choral works; John Rutter's mellow *A Clare Benediction*.

September 16 – *Cantate Domino (Come Ye With Joyfulness)* by Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni, Italian organist/composer of the late Baroque period; John Rutter's beloved *The Lord Bless You and Keep You*.

September 23 – *O Praise God in His Holiness* by English composer John Weldon (1676-1736), who once studied with Henry Purcell; the lovely Swedish hymn, *Children of the Heavenly Father*, arranged by 20th century American, Austin Lovelace, affectionately considered the Dean of American Church Music.

September 30 – *Jubilate (Let Us Praise You)* by Mozart, arranged by British composer, Alan Bullard (b. 1947); Mozart's beloved *Ave Verum Corpus*.

As previously mentioned, choir rehearsals will be held on THURSDAY evenings this year, beginning with the 13th. New singers are most welcome – please let me know if you're interested! If you've ever sung in a school or church choir, we'd love to have you join us - so, if you're a soprano, alto, tenor, or bass, let's talk!

*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

New Study Begins

This September the Library Small Group will begin an in-depth study of the Gospel of John Chapters 1-10. When asked what is distinctive about John's Gospel, we might be tempted to answer "Everything!" as more than 90 percent of the material in this book is without parallel in any of the other three gospels. John's Gospel contains many stories not told elsewhere in the New Testament. Stories that are told in the other Gospels are sometimes told quite differently by John. This Gospel is also notable for its abundant use of symbolism which will require us to be aware that there may be deeper or multiple levels of meaning.

Please join us Sundays at 9:15 in the Hawks Hall Library as we discuss this Gospel together.

Come for one or all sessions. All are welcome.



Fall Youth Service Hour Opportunities



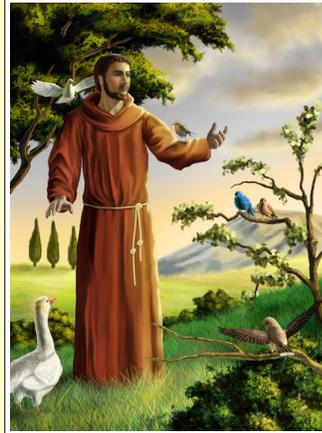
Heal the Bay 2018 Coastal Cleanup Day

Coastal Cleanup Day is the world's largest volunteer day to protect our environment. In coordination with a statewide and global movement, together we'll make a big dent in removing trash and debris from the environment. During Coastal Cleanup Day 2017, volunteers removed 800,000 pounds of trash and recyclables from California's coast and inland waterways in only three hours.

Please join us on
Saturday, September 15
 to participate!

SCHEDULE:

Cleanup Volunteers meet for carpool at Ascension at 8:30.
 9 AM – 10 AM Clean up at Arroyo Seco
 Depart Arroyo Seco at 10 AM
 Treat Time at Starbucks
 Return to Ascension at 11 AM



Blessing of the Animals Sunday, October 7

Pet-Sitting
 &
 Treats

9:00 AM – 11:30 AM



CROP Hunger Walks help to support the overall work of Church World Service, particularly grass-roots development efforts around the world. Join us on Sunday, November 4th for the 2018 Pasadena Area CROP Walk. Carpools will depart immediately after the 10:15 AM Mass. Participants, please bring a sack lunch or money for lunch at McDonald's. We plan on completing the 5K walk which starts at St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church at 1:30 PM. Participants will return to Ascension when all have completed the distance! For more information, contact Jobi McGuffie at (626) 710-3021.

EfM
 EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY

Classes forming now.

EFM is a four year course study of theology starting with the Old Testament and continuing through the New Testament, church history, and personal theology. The art of Theological Reflection is taught every year. We meet on Sunday afternoons for 36 weeks (late September thru early July). Everyone that has taken this course has been more than satisfied and learned a lot. There is a cost of **\$375 per year**. See me if you are interested.

Mike Beach, Verger

It's Coming!

Labor Day Weekend

Back to School Activities

Autumn Weather

And

**The Arrival of your very own
 stewardship packet the week of
 September 17th.**



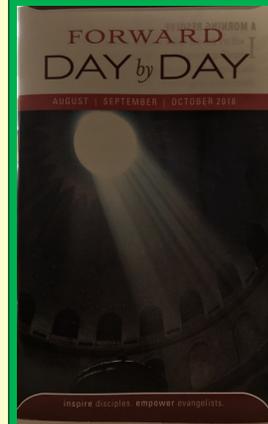
"Here's a unique way to support our parish! If you have a car, truck, boat or other vehicle that's become a nuisance, you can now donate that vehicle to Ascension. You'll be able to write the value of the vehicle off as a tax deduction and Ascension will benefit from the proceeds of its sale. Simply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

"Missed that Announcement?"
You can now access the Lay Ministry Schedule on the Church's website at
www.ascension-sierramadre.com



The new Day by Day booklets from Forward Movement are available at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

A \$2 donation is requested.

The 2018 Parish Directory is now available.

Wish no more!
It's here!

There are two ways to receive it:

- 1) Email a request to the Parish office and we will send you an electronic copy in PDF format.
- 2) For a \$5 charge, we will give you a printed copy of the directory. This will help to offset our printing costs as there are a considerable number of colored copies. Please email or call the parish office with your request.

Have you ever wished you could make your pledge payment from your computer? Or perhaps on your cell phone or tablet? In the spirit of granting wishes, an online donation feature is now available on Ascension's recently refreshed website. It's as easy as 1, 2, 3...

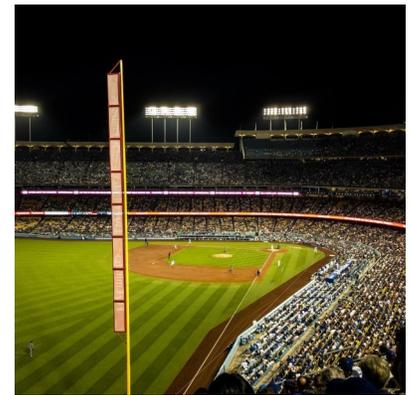


- 1) Go to the "Give" page (located at www.ascension-sierramadre.com/give)
- 2) Click the "Make a Donation" button
- 3) Complete the two-step form and click "Submit"

Oh...and don't forget to recycle that stack of pledge envelopes you no longer need!



LA EPISCOPAL DODGER NIGHT FRIDAY, AUGUST 31, 2018



Forward Today: The holiness of labor

August 29, 2018

Forward Today, scott gunn

Dear friends in Christ,

We are coming up to Labor Day weekend, at least for readers from the United States. You might wonder why I'm mentioning this, since Labor Day is a secular holiday, and I usually don't write about secular holidays.

It turns out that our Book of Common Prayer has a collect appointed for Labor Day. You can find the contemporary version on page 261.

Almighty God, you have so linked our lives one with another that all we do affects, for good or ill, all other lives: So guide us in the work we do, that we may do it not for self alone, but for the common good; and, as we seek a proper return for our own labor, make us mindful of the rightful aspirations of other workers, and arouse our concern for those who are out of work; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

It's a lovely prayer, isn't it? That prayer dignifies the work that we all do, whether we are employed or not. It also reminds us of the importance of all those others who work and of those who lack employment.

If you are in the US celebrating the holiday, I hope you'll set aside a few moments for prayer or conversation with those around you. Remember the dignity of work and the indignity of exploitation. Pray for those who, in our culture that assigns value to people based on income, lack employment. Think about how everyone has a vocation, and ask how God might be calling you and your loved ones to labor?

Yours faithfully,
Scott Gunn, Executive Director



Image Source: Pixabay

SEPTEMBER 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass	3 LABOR DAY OFFICE CLOSED	4 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group Piano Tuning Hall/11:30	5 9:45am—2:30pm Gooden Drama Classes K-5/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	6 7am Mass 8:05—8:35 All School Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 10:15am Staff Mtg 3-6pm Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary		8 Private Daisy Troop Mtg 3pm-4pm Hall
Parish Administrator Out of Office						
9 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass 2pm EFM Mtg/Library <div style="border: 2px dashed red; padding: 5px; text-align: center; color: red; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> Fall Kick-off Party & Potluck *after each service* </div>	10 8:45—9:20 Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel 9:35—10:15 Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) in Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm <div style="background-color: #000080; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Fr. Bamberger Out of Office Clergy Support Group </div>	11 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	12 9:45am—2:30pm Gooden Drama Classes K-5/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	13 7am Mass 8:05—8:35 All School Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 3-6pm Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 7:30pm -Choir Rehearsal/Hall	14 Private Spiritual Direction 9:30—1pm Rector's Office	15 Private Party 10am-4pm Hall
16 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass 2pm EFM Mtg/Library	17 8:45—9:20 Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel 9:35—10:15 Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel	18 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group Vestry Mtg Hall/7pm	19 9:45am—2:30pm Gooden Drama Classes K-5/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	20 7am Mass 8:05—8:35 All School Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 10:15am Staff Mtg 3-6pm Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 7:30pm -Choir Rehearsal/Hall	21	22 Private Party 3pm-8pm Hall
23 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour/Sunday School 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass Noon—PMC Meeting/Library 2pm EFM Mtg/Library Shelbi Thistlewhite Funeral & Reception 2pm-6pm/Church & Hall	24 8:45—9:20 Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel 9:35—10:15 Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) in Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm	25 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group Private Gooden Mtg Coffee w/Carl 8-9am/Hall Private Daisy Troop Mtg 4-5:30/Hall	26 9:45am—2:30pm Gooden Drama Classes K-5/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	27 7am Mass 8:05—8:35 All School Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 3-6pm Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 7:30pm -Choir Rehearsal/Hall	28	29 Reserved for Private Party Hall Exact Time TBD
Fr. Bamberger Vacation						
30 Clergy-McGuffie						
Fr. Bamberger Vacation						
Fr. Bamberger Out of Town—GOE's in NC						