



# The SPIRE 2020

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



## Upcoming Events

\*Please see calendar on page 4 for an updated list of 'virtual' events.\*

### All-Diocesan Livestream Service with Bishop Taylor Sunday, September 20th @ 10am

On Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, Bishop Taylor will celebrate the Holy Eucharist and offer a message to the Diocese at 10am. The service will be in English and Spanish.

There will be information about how to access this service via Zoom and Facebook in the weekly update as it becomes available.



## From the Rector

Every Monday since the middle of March, the Bishops of the Episcopal Church and their Canons to the Ordinary have met via Zoom to learn, pray, and support each other. On Monday, August 13<sup>th</sup>, they were joined by Dr. Anthony Fauci. Dr Fauci, himself a worshipping man of faith, offered his wisdom and expertise to the gathered Church leaders. Our own Bishop Taylor took notes on what Dr. Fauci had to offer.

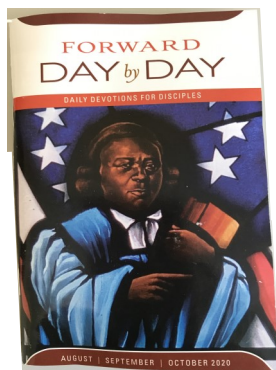
Bishop Taylor said Dr. Fauci "was eager to meet with religious leaders because a false tension had been created between public health and worship." "Public health principles are a gateway to worship." He remarked that we already know what is needed- universal wearing of masks, social distancing—at least six feet-, avoiding crowds, outdoors is better, and avoiding singing.

Having these principles in mind, and aware that the "numbers" in Los Angeles County are improving, on Sunday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, we will resume gathering in person for the Holy Eucharist. The service will be held at 7:30 am (due to the weather), and folks are asked to bring their own chairs. Distancing will be observed, masks will be worn, and Communion will be distributed in one kind. At 9 am, we will continue to have a service on Zoom and Facebook Live.

Your Vestry, staff, and I believe that this is a prudent way to move forward. So, I invite you to join this opportunity for our community to be reunited. Join in the celebration of the Eucharist. And sing the Lord's song – but in your heart and out loud for the time being!

Blessings,  
**Father Michael+**

Copies of the new **Forward Movement Day by Day** booklets have been left at the front of the church. Feel free to stop by and pick up a copy.



## A New Diocesan Discerner

**Keiichi Matsumoto** will be joining us this month for the season of discernment through next June. Keiichi and his family live in Alhambra, and his children will be starting the Gooden School this year. Keiichi's sponsoring parish is Holy Nativity, Westchester, and he comes to us having completed his Master of Divinity at Fuller Seminary in 2019.

*Welcome Keiichi!*

## AUGUST 2020 (through August 28) Pledge Payment Snapshot



**2020 Budget**  
\$221,000

YTD Budget: \$147,333  
YTD Actual: \$133,309  
Difference: \$-14,024

## Let's Keep Ascension Moving Forward....

Please consider, as you are able, keeping your pledge current, especially during this time of Covid -19. The Church still has financial obligations in spite of our reduced capacity. You might consider signing up through your bank for auto-pay scheduled giving, or, perhaps, mailing your pledge to the parish office. You can also make a pledge payment or donation online via the church website. Go to: <https://www.ascension-sierramadre.com/give.html>.

Your gifts are fuel we use to

"...Keep Ascension Moving Forward....".

*Thank You*

**REAL LIFE**

It seems to me that all I've been doing for months is reading, writing, discussing, thinking, and praying about all things "pandemic." It's time to take a break.

**REAL FAITH**

A while ago, I was asked to share my thoughts on why I became a deacon and I thought I would share them with you. There will be plenty of opportunities in the months ahead to deal with the pandemic and all the other issues challenging us in these complicated and unprecedented times.

Whenever I'm asked, "Why did you become a deacon?" I'm never quite sure how to answer. It's not that I don't know, but it's hard to determine what response would make the most sense to those asking.

My Dad owned "*Sneezy's Bar & Grill*," and it was there growing up that I learned two important lessons that have carried me through my life: most importantly, the art of hospitality and the other, how to cook. I watched my Dad treat all customers as if they were family, and I came to think of them as Aunts and Uncles. Along the way, I learned to cook, wait tables, and clean the steam table. My experience at Sneezy's Bar & Grill was the first step in my path to the diaconate, the opportunity to practice what I ultimately wound up doing all along -serving and making everyone feel like family.

After college, I taught high school English and eventually went to work for a major airline for the next 25 years. If you really want to learn about customer service and hospitality, work for an airline. Just before I retired from Delta, I attended culinary school and why not, since I already knew my way around a restaurant kitchen and loved to cook. Culinary School led to my stint as a personal chef and caterer.

A friend, who later became the Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles, was one of my first clients. Besides catering some of his events, I started working on special projects on a part time basis early in 2002.

Well, catering lasted about thirty seconds; and during the next nine years, I served as the Bishop's Chaplain, assuming many responsibilities. Along the way, the Bishop asked me, "What are you doing with your life?" I replied, "What do you mean?" Without missing a beat, he said, "Maybe it's time to think about ordained ministry."

I'll admit that I had thought about entering the ministry many times, but I always allowed life to keep getting in the way. It took a little while, but I finally figured out that it was time to name it and claim it.

I was ordained a permanent deacon on January 14, 2005, and remained with the Bishop through 2010. In 2012, I began serving in a parish (Ascension) dedicating myself to extending hospitality and customer service to every parishioner, making each feel like aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers, and sisters.

So why did I become a deacon? I wanted to do what I've always been doing...serving God's people; making them feel special; and, by extending God's hospitality, letting them know how special they are in His eyes. And now I proclaim the gospel with the blessing of the church.

Live well, live blessed, proclaim the gospel.

**Deacon Ed+**

## **FLOWERS....FLOWERS...FLOWERS...FLOWERS...FLOWERS**

Just a reminder- if you have signed up for Altar Flowers and have already paid for them(\$40), there will be flowers on that Sunday. However, if you have signed up but NOT paid for them, there will not be flowers...prices have gone up considerably because of COVID, and Altar Guild is not in a position to cover the cost. If you do wish to pay for flowers, checks can be sent to:

St. Anne's Altar Guild  
c/o Ascension Church  
25 E. Laurel Ave.  
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

*or to*

St. Anne's Altar Guild  
c/o Lynne Holl  
85 Suffolk Ave.  
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

Hoping all are well... Thank you, **St. Anne's Altar Guild**





## VESTRY NEWS ~ Building Community and Moving Forward

For the last few months, most of us have experienced Church of the Ascension through Facebook Live or Zoom which can leave one with the impression that our Church is just something that happens online for an hour on Sundays. However, behind the scenes a lot of great things are happening.

First off, to bring you church online Charlie Noecker and Raymond Smith have been working to expand the wireless service inside of the church to facilitate our Sunday morning web cast. We are learning that many folks who would not otherwise be able to attend services are now joining in on a regular basis online, so we will be maintaining an online presence as we emerge from isolation.

Next, following advice from Dr. Anthony Fauci to the National Church, we are looking into starting services outside as early as Labor Day weekend. You will need to bring your own chairs, wear masks, and maintain social distance; but we have been informed that if we follow the rules, this is safe. More to follow as we finalize our plans.

We also have some significant capital improvement issues in the works. Our roof replacement plan now sets the summer of 2021 as the ideal time to replace our sanctuary roof. In addition, we are looking at scraping the old paint off the Parish House for some much needed patching and repair.

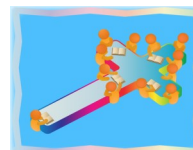
Finally, On September 27 we will kick off our 2020 stewardship campaign with the theme "Building Community." We will take a few weeks to hear from our fellow parishioners about how our community has supported them and how we can support our church community as we prepare to emerge from isolation.

Things are moving ahead in our community; and in the months to come, we will be sharing more news; so stay tuned.

**Gordon Tomaske, Sr. Warden**

**"Between the Masses" Discussion Group...** Did you know that the Between the Masses Discussion Group is still meeting every Sunday via Zoom call (*after the 9am service and coffee hour*)? The group meets for spiritual (and perhaps "spirited") discussion of pre-assigned readings (usually brief!) on a wide variety of Christian themes. Reading selections are determined by the group itself. Please feel free to join the group even if you have not read the week's reading selection.

To get the reading selection emailed to you, please email Gordon and Diane Tomaske at [gdtomaske@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gdtomaske@sbcglobal.net). The Zoom invitation is the same one that is used for Sunday worship.



### NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Ordinarily September arrives with the return of the choir to the loft, marking the end of our summer hiatus. It's always a great joy for us to gather at Thursday rehearsals and on Sunday mornings for services ~ our presence with each other and our interaction in making music to the Lord energizes our souls and spirits. This year the loft remains empty and silent; our Harris organ waits patiently to fill the sanctuary with praise; likewise our beloved Kawai grand piano awaits the return of choristers preparing anthems in Hawks Hall. We miss each other; we miss the music. Until the time that we can once again resume being a singing church, I invite you to join with my daughter, Monica, and me in singing a weekly hymn during our online services. The hymns for September include:

9/6 – 48 ES FLOG EIN KLEINS WALDVOGELEIN – O Day of Radiant Gladness

9/13 – 376 HYMN TO JOY – Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee

9/20 – 660 MARYTON – O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee

9/27 – 339 SCHMUCKE DICH – Deck Thyself, My Soul, With Gladness

May God bless you and yours throughout these challenging pandemic times.

*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**

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

## SEPTEMBER 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*	2 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*	3 9am Forum Zoom Call	4 <b>First Day of school for Gooden</b>	5
PARISH ADMINISTRATOR OUT OF OFFICE/VACATION						
6 7:30am Outside Worship w/Eucharist-Rite I 9am Sunday Worship-Rite II Facebook Live & Zoom Call Virtual Coffee Hour after service *Zoom Call* Between the Masses Discussion Group after coffee hour *Zoom Call*	7  PARISH OFFICE CLOSED	8 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*	9 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*	10 9am Forum Zoom Call 10:30am Staff Mtg Zoom Call	11	12
13 7:30am Outside Worship w/Eucharist-Rite I 9am Sunday Worship-Rite II Facebook Live & Zoom Call Virtual Coffee Hour after service *Zoom Call* Between the Masses Discussion Group after coffee hour *Zoom Call*	14	15 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*  Vestry Meeting 7:30pm Zoom Call	16 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*	17 9am Forum Zoom Call	18	19
20 7:30am Outside Worship w/Eucharist-Rite I 9am Sunday Worship-Rite II Facebook Live & Zoom Call Virtual Coffee Hour after service *Zoom Call* Between the Masses Discussion Group after coffee hour *Zoom Call*  All-Diocesan Livestream Service with Bishop Taylor @ 10am	21	22 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*	23 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*	24 9am Forum Zoom Call 10:30am Staff Mtg Zoom Call	25	26
27 7:30am Outside Worship w/Eucharist-Rite I 9am Sunday Worship-Rite II Facebook Live & Zoom Call Virtual Coffee Hour after service *Zoom Call* Between the Masses Discussion Group after coffee hour *Zoom Call*	28	29 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*	30 Communion under Special Circumstances 8:30am—10am *By Appointment Only*			