



The SPIRE 2021

*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.



It's summertime...

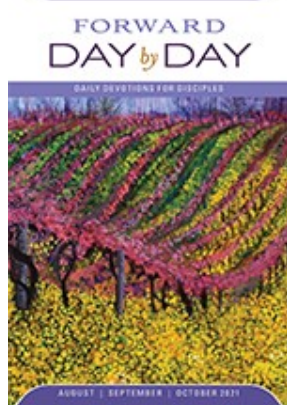
**as you are
snorkeling, surfing, or just
hanging out at the beach,
please remember to send in
your pledge payment!**

Thank You!



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 appreciated.



From the Rector

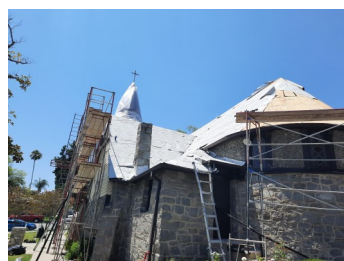
It has been a long time coming, but now the reality of the church getting its long overdue new roof is upon us. As I write this article, the workers are installing the "slate" right over my office.

Perhaps some background might be helpful. When I arrived at the Church of the Ascension in 1985, the building had a tile roof that was installed decades earlier. In a windstorm, the roof was damaged; and because the tiles contained asbestos, they could not be replaced. In about 1987 or 1988, the decision was made to replace the roof with a material called Hardee Shake, which looked similar to slate. (The original roof of the church in 1888 was cedar shake – no longer an option in this fire-prone neighborhood.) As it turned out, Hardee Shake was a defective product and is no longer made. As the material deteriorated, it became clear we needed a new roof. Again. Thus began the process which has led to the pounding sound right above my desk.

After consulting with historic building experts and architects, the decision was made to use a product called Da Vinci Slate. While the tiles themselves are made of a type of plastic, they resemble actual slate. We then sought out a qualified contractor with experience installing this product. At the same time, we began seeking the funds to pay for this project. Initially, we had hoped to put the new roof on during the summer of 2020, but the pandemic put a hold on everything. This past Spring, encouraged by some generous legacy gifts, the Vestry made the decision to proceed. And so, on the 20th of July the scaffolding went up; and on the 21st the old roof started to come off. We did have a freak rainstorm during the night of July 25th, but the plastic coverings did their job, and now the workers are making good progress. I'm told they expect to be done in about two weeks.

I want to thank all of you who have already given to the roof project. Your generosity has made this replacement possible. I want to encourage anyone who has yet to contribute to this undertaking to prayerfully consider making a gift now. I believe that our new roof will be a beautiful, lasting act of stewardship for our historic and wonderful church.

Blessings,
MAB+



JULY 2021

Pledge Payment Snapshot



YTD Budget:	\$128,917
YTD Actual:	\$129,452
Difference:	\$535



It's never been easy to be a follower of Jesus and to be a good Christian. Real faith in the real world seems more challenging today than ever before. Actually, it is challenging; and I'm more conflicted than I'd like to be. I'd like to think I'm not prejudiced; but if I tell myself the truth, I am. I'd like to think I'm not judgmental, but add that to the list. Try, and believe me I try hard, to remember that we are all the same in God's eyes; but I seem to be having a problem with that too these days.

Recently I remembered a poem by Richard Blanco that brought me to tears when I heard him read it a while back. Maybe a good cry would make us all feel better and help us remember our "sameness."

(Richard Blanco is an American poet, public speaker, author, and civil engineer. He is the fifth poet to read at a United States presidential inauguration, having read the poem "One Today" for Barack Obama's second inauguration.)

One Today

One sun rose on us today, kindled over our shores, peeking over the Smokies, greeting the faces of the Great Lakes, spreading a simple truth across the Great Plains, then charging across the Rockies. One light, waking up rooftops, under each one, a story told by our silent gestures moving behind windows.

My face, your face, millions of faces in morning's mirrors, each one yawning to life, crescendoing into our day: pencil-yellow school buses, the rhythm of traffic lights, fruit stands: apples, limes, and oranges arrayed like rainbows begging our praise. Silver trucks heavy with oil or paper— bricks or milk, teeming over highways alongside us, on our way to clean tables, read ledgers, or save lives— to teach geometry, or ring-up groceries as my mother did for twenty years, so I could write this poem.

All of us as vital as the one light we move through, the same light on blackboards with lessons for the day: equations to solve, history to question, or atoms imagined, the "I have a dream" we keep dreaming, or the impossible vocabulary of sorrow that won't explain the empty desks of twenty children marked absent today, and forever. Many prayers, but one light breathing color into stained glass windows, life into the faces of bronze statues, warmth onto the steps of our museums and park benches as mothers watch children slide into the day.

One ground. Our ground, rooting us to every stalk of corn, every head of wheat sown by sweat and hands, hands gleaning coal or planting windmills in deserts and hilltops that keep us warm, hands digging trenches, routing pipes and cables, hands as worn as my father's cutting sugarcane so my brother and I could have books and shoes.

The dust of farms and deserts, cities and plains mingled by one wind—our breath. Breathe. Hear it through the day's gorgeous din of honking cabs, buses launching down avenues, the symphony clothes lines.

Hear: squeaky playground swings, trains whistling, or whispers across café tables Hear: the doors we open for each other all day, saying: hello | shalom, buon giorno | howdy | namaste | or buenos días in the language my mother taught me—in every language spoken into one wind carrying our lives without prejudice, as these words break from my lips.

One sky: since the Appalachians and Sierras claimed their majesty, and the Mississippi and Colorado worked their way to the sea. Thank the work of our hands: weaving steel into bridges, finishing one more report for the boss on time, stitching another wound 3 or uniform, the first brush stroke on a portrait, or the last floor on the Freedom Tower jutting into a sky that yields to our resilience.

One sky, toward which we sometimes lift our eyes tired from work: some days guessing at the weather of our lives, some days giving thanks for a love that loves you back, sometimes praising a mother who knew how to give, or forgiving a father who couldn't give what you wanted.

Continued on next page...

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We head home: through the gloss of rain or weight of snow, or the plum blush of dusk, but always—home, always under one sky, our sky. And always one moon like a silent drum tapping on every rooftop and every window, of one country—all of us—facing the stars hope—a new constellation waiting for us to map it, waiting for us to name it—together.

Be well, be blessed, remember.

Deacon Ed+

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

With the intent of recovering some of the hymns we lost to the pandemic last year, we enjoyed singing an Advent hymn during the last two Sundays of July. During August, we'll observe Christmas for the first three weeks and Epiphany for the final two. Enjoy a belated celebration ~ and a foretaste of things to come this fall.

Throughout my two decades at Ascension, we've been blessed by the marvelous music provided by our talented choir. I can't begin to tell you how many times I've been told how remarkable our choral music is, particularly in light of our being a small congregation (and, of course, I concurred!). The past year we've lost several members to relocation and begin the fall season with a deficit of singers ~ in particular, we need altos and tenors; but an expansion of our soprano and bass sections would also be welcome. If we as a congregation are to continue the excellence of our program, it's imperative that some of our members ~ you ~ come forward and offer your voices in service to our Lord and to our fellow parishioners. Please see me if you're interested in this aspect of ministry. I look forward to our conversations.

*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

THANK YOU to all those who donated to the Friends In Deed Back to School Drive!



Sign-up for Flowers and Sanctuary Candles!

Sign-up using Sign-up Genius (see links below) or in person at the back of the church.

Payments should be made by cash or CHECK (\$40.00 (flowers) and \$15.00 (Sanctuary candle) ****checks 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-sanctuary>

Altar Flowers:

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



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

AUGUST 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	2	3	4 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	5 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office 10:30am Staff Meeting	6	7
8 <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	9	10	11 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	12 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office	13	14
15 <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	16	17 7:30pm Vestry Meeting Hall	18 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	19 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office 10:30am Staff Meeting	20	21
22 <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	23	24	25 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	26 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office	27	28
	Parish Administrator Vacation—Out of Office					
29 <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> <u>w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	30	31				