



The SPIRE 2018

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



Upcoming Events

December 2 – Advent Begins
ER&D Guest Speaker

December 8 – Annual Holiday
Shopping Party

December 9 – Noon/Library
Parish Ministry Council Mtg

December 18 – 7pm/Hall
Vestry Mtg

December 22 –
Church Greening

December 23 – Sierra Madre
Candlelight Walk

Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services

Monday, December 24th

- ◇ Family Service & Pageant 5:00pm
- ◇ Hymns & Carols at 10:30pm
- ◇ Midnight Mass at 11:00pm

Tuesday, December 25th

Mass at 11:00am
NO CHILDCARE

Vestry Nominations Due Now!

See article on page 5..

Pledge Payment Snapshot-November



2018 Budget
Amount:
\$211,001

YTD Budget: \$193,418
YTD Actual: \$195,914

From the Rector

In my article last month, I reflected upon the spate of events – acts of violence and natural disasters. Well, November hasn't improved.

Early in the month, I had a previously scheduled trip to the Diocese of Northern California to represent Episcopal Relief and Development at the Diocesan Convention. I had no sooner arrived when I received word early Thursday morning of the horrific shooting at the Borderline Bar and Grill in Thousand Oaks. I was immediately in contact with some of my colleagues who serve parishes in the area. They were steadfast in their pastoral care at the hospitals and the two close-by universities.

As I started to drive to Redding with my colleague Lura Steele, we very quickly became aware that there was a major fire erupting. We drove through (actually under) one the most unusual smoke plumes that I have ever seen, and I've seen some doozies in my time. By the time we arrived in Redding, we had heard that Southern California was on fire as well.

Since that trip, I have spent time almost every day coaching and consulting with church leaders, teaching, and offering pastoral support in both dioceses.

As I said last month, "It is always a legitimate question to ask where is God to be found in the midst of difficult and troubling times. As people of faith, we believe that the love of God can be found wherever there are acts of kindness, acts of courage, and acts of sacrificial giving." And once again, I ask us to recommit to our core principles as we strive to follow Jesus.

Blessings, MAB+



Ascension Christmas Outreach / Hillsides Adopt a Family 2018

This year we are helping one family of 8 people.

Mom & Dad: Reynaldo, Reina

Children: Reina, Melissa, Vanessa, Rolando, Reynaldo, Jose

Sign-up sheets are in Hawks Hall

A few details:

- 1) Items need to be at Ascension **by Sunday, December 16.**
- 2) Attach a label or tag to each gift with the recipient's name.
- 3) Include your name if you would like to.
- 4) New unwrapped items only.
- 5) If you like, you may also donate wrapping paper/ribbon/bows.
- 6) Please write the amount on any gift cards.

If shopping isn't your thing, you can donate money instead and we'll do the shopping for you! **Please make your check payable to "Hillsides"** and put it in the plate or deliver it to the parish office.





10th Annual Women's Room Thanksgiving Luncheon November 20, 2018

Ascension Families Offered Their Time, Talent and Treasure
And Walked Away with Gifts of Gratitude and Satisfaction.
All in the name of God and Giving Back to Our Community....

Once again, Ascension stepped up and prepared an excellent Thanksgiving meal for **40** ladies, **12** Friends in Deed volunteers, and **5** staff members, for a total of **57** people. Members of **36** Ascension families organized, donated to, shopped for, prepared, served and cleaned up after this luncheon. Although there was clear support from our Ascension congregation as a whole, we offer special thanks to the following families:

Adde, Bamberger, Calleton, Callihan, Clifton, Coulter, Cox, Cundiff, Deacon Ed, Dickey, Duffy, Farrow, Gorman, Hanson, Holbrook, Holl, Huffman, Jesser, Keith, Laux, McGuffie, Meehan, Ostrye, Outhouse, Prentice, Rasmussen, Rowe, Smith-Kellock, Stockly, Tobin, Two Dougall Families, Two Rhodus Families, Walton and Woods.

Very special thanks to Richele Duffy. She not only prepared six of the food items, including a turkey, but also managed the handling of the food at the Lutheran Church, keeping it hot and ready to serve to our guests. Thank you as well to Nicole Hanson and Natalie Dougall for preparing 3 additional turkeys. One was even smoked (Thank you, Patrick Dougall).

Each of the guests was able to leave the luncheon with the following:

- A neck scarf created by the Friends In Deed Volunteers
- Enough additional food, including dessert and candy, for another meal in a sealable take-away container
- A festive bag filled with freshly baked cookies (Prepared by Sandra Dickey and Pat Woods)
- A bag with handles containing Christmas/Holiday cards and envelopes (donated by many of you), stamps and a pen prepared by our Outreach Ministry Leader, Scott Callihan and family
- A heavy duty reusable plastic bag with handles to hold their items and keep them dry.

Friends in Deed took all the leftovers back to the Women's Room and was able to serve lunch to even more women on the following day. Your gift to others continued to give even after the Thanksgiving Luncheon.

Marlene Martinez, the Women's Room Program Director, indicated that the feedback from the ladies was great! They loved the luncheon.

A good day was had by all. Once again, you made a difference.

**Respectfully submitted with love and appreciation,
Maggie Outhouse and Nicole Hansen**



Perry Exterior Restoration Project Update

The restoration of the east Church exterior rock surfaces is the focal point of the project, happily the vast majority of this is complete with some individual filling in and final grouting remaining.

Our sanctuary door is possibly 130+ years old, the very careful work to transform/restore the door starts on Saturday morning Dec. 1st.

GET WELL SOON MARTHANNE

Tim Hayden, Vestry Member and Perry Project Manager

DOING MORE

I often read on line articles from Forward Day by Day written by executive director Scott Gunn. As we are starting a new church year with the first Sunday of Advent, I thought I would share some of his thoughts. Perhaps we should consider adopting his message as our Christian New Year's Resolution.

This particular article was published a week or so before our recent election. I include only portions of what he has to say. Father Gunn writes that after the election,

“...whoever wins, whoever loses, there is work to do. Whichever party has power, there is work to do.

You see, as a Christian, I am commanded to love my neighbors. One important way to love my neighbors is to ensure that they have the opportunity to thrive as the people God has made them to be. Everyone deserves to have basic human needs met, security, and freedom.

We love our neighbors by supporting efforts to care for the most vulnerable members of society. We love our neighbors by working for a time when our government and our society are free of oppression, violence, and degradation

As Christians we are accountable to the high standards of our faith. Those high standards are clear: we care for the hungry, the widows, the orphans, and those whom society has rejected.

We have work to do.”

We at Ascension already have made a start in helping our neighbors. Maybe this November you have reached out by Contributing to the weekly food ingathering for Friends in Deed **or by** Participating in the Women's Room Thanksgiving Dinner.

This December we can

- ⇒ Reach out to a Hillside's Family
- ⇒ Contribute to relief efforts through Episcopal Relief and Development
- ⇒ Donate toys to Friends in Deed.
- ⇒ Help someone who needs a helping hand in your neighborhood
- ⇒ Find our own individual ways of helping those who are in need



But we have work to do.

Your Vestry and Parish Ministry Council are committed to finding a way for Ascension to **Do More** by investigating how we can help seniors in Sierra Madre. We'll have a plan in place and ways you can help by early spring. **And** Each of us individually needs to work on devising a plan for reaching out to those whom society has rejected.

Whether individually or as a parish, we have work to do. We have resolutions to make.

Happy New Year! Jean Rowe, Senior Warden

(Note: One way you can help now is by increasing your pledge by \$3.00/week so that we have the funds to Do More.)

A thank you and a request

The end of November officially ended our 2018 Stewardship campaign.

The Vestry and I want to thank all of you who have pledged. Together we have pledged \$201,321.60.
But unfortunately, this amount does not meet our stewardship goal of **\$240,000. We are \$40,000 short.**

As I write this article, 33 parishioners have yet to pledge. And so I am making a request of those who have buried your pledge form somewhere to once again show your commitment to Ascension by making a pledge.

As you know, Vestry must finalize the 2019 budget at our December meeting. We can only budget based on the funds pledged. Based on the status quo, we will have to make some cuts. Once again the two top items to be eliminated will be earthquake insurance and childcare/hospitality helper.

Last year at the last minute, the parish met the stewardship goal. We are trusting that with your help we can meet this year's goal as well. I'm praying.

Jean Rowe, Sr. Warden

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

As we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child, Advent anthems include:

December 2

Hark, the Glad Sound, the Savior Comes by David Thorne and Godfrey Ridout's familiar *O Come, Divine Messiah*

December 9

From Handel's *Messiah*, *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings*; during communion, *Remember, Christians All* by Thomas Ravenscroft

December 16 – Gaudete Sunday – Rejoice!

E'en So, Lord Jesus, Quickly Come by Paul Manz; Paul Ladd, Jr.'s *Drop Down Dew*

December 23 – in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Song of Mary by Richard Shephard and *Ave Maria* by Adolph Lehmann

After a month of waiting we finally celebrate Christmas! A quartet will provide anthems for the 5:00 service: *From Bethlehem, Fair City* by Richard Proulx and Roland Martin's *Christmas Folksong*. At 10:30 we join for Hymns and Carols, followed by the 11:00 Christ Mass. Anthems presented by the full choir will include:

Fanfare for Christmas Day – Martin Shaw
All Glory Be to God on High – Johannes Crüger
Hodie Christus Natus Est – Healey Willan
From Bethlehem, Fair City – Richard Proulx
Christmas Folksong – Roland E. Martin
Star Carol – John Rutter
What Sweeter Music – John Rutter

The congregation will join the choir in singing many familiar carols, several presented with fresh harmonizations and soaring descants. All are encouraged to share in this glorious celebration of the birth of our Lord.

A blessed Advent and merry Christmas to each of you!



Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

VESTRY NOMINATIONS DUE NOW

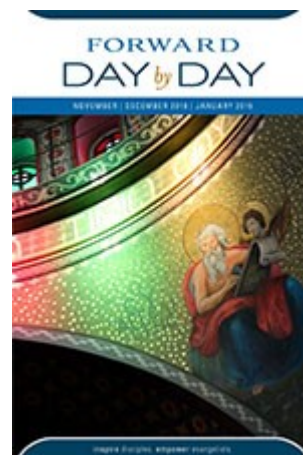
Each January at our annual meeting, we elect three new members of the Vestry, the body within the congregation that, with the Rector, leads the parish. Vestry members are elected for three year terms. Vestry meets once a month throughout the year. Additional meetings (and committee meetings) are held as needed. A Vestry member must be willing to accept the responsibility of regular attendance and be willing to serve on one or more committees.

Now is the time for the parish to nominate next year's Vestry candidates. According to the Diocesan guidelines, a Vestry nominee must be 16 years of age or older and be a confirmed communicant in good standing in the Episcopal Church. He or she must also attend church services at Ascension regularly and be a pledging contributor to the parish. A member of the Vestry may not be a member of any other church.

Names of nominees should be submitted to Father Michael or any Vestry member **by December 25th.**

Don't forget to pick up a copy of the new Forward Movement Day by Day Booklet. You can find copies at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

A \$2 donation is requested.



Last month, we began a discussion about letting go and engaging in spiritual renewal. We now find ourselves in the beginning of Advent, and what a perfect time to become fully engaged in the sacred process of spiritual renewal. As I mentioned last month, spiritual renewal all begins with letting go. It's the process of learning what is right and true for ourselves which sometimes involves struggle, failure, confusion, and frustration. But where to begin?

We are all very invested in the outcomes that we expect and desire. They can range from the very complex to the whimsical. They are sometimes beyond explanation. We know or think we know what we want and need, and no one is going to change our minds. This condition, my friends, is called "being stuck."

Let's go back to spiritual renewal for a moment and remember that the ultimate goal is to achieve better clarity about our God given purpose in God's world, not in ours and not what we think the world should be or what we think we need it to be.

This month our focus is on letting go of "outcomes" and releasing any emotional constraints that may be holding us back. We want to practice and hopefully master the art of fully trusting in God and the movement of the Spirit in our lives. In other words, we need to realign our expectations with God's and seek his outcomes, not ours.

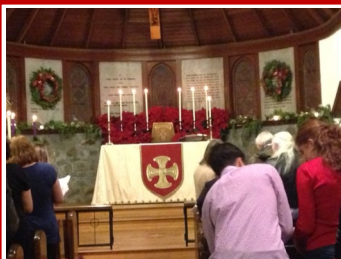
As we begin to let go of our expected outcomes, it may be necessary to take an alternate route to our destination; and as we navigate our way, we just may find ourselves changing for the better. But remember, we're not alone. The Spirit is providing signs, symbols, and directions all the time. All we need to do is slow down, closely observe, and trust the process.

Is it easy? No. We need to be brave and let go of the plans and ideas [our planned and expected outcomes] that are not working for us. We need to trust and follow what is leading us in a new direction. That means trusting in God.

In the process, our past inhibitions, self-doubts, and confidence issues will fade away as we let go and trust that the Spirit is leading us to where we need to be. We need to trust that we will be led to God's planned outcomes for our lives.

This process can be best summed up in four words that we pray whenever we say the Lord's Prayer: "thy will be done." And then what? What if the outcome is the realization that we are exactly where God wants and needs us to be? What if the outcome is his will being done through how we live our lives? What if God is living and acting in the world through us? "Remember it is Christ himself who has taken form among people." (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)

Live well, live blessed, live in the expectation of God's outcome.
Deacon Ed+



Believe it or not we are at that time of the year again where your help and contributions allow the Altar Guild to decorate our beautiful space. We count on your generosity to make this happen. Remember during Advent there are no flowers except for the third Sunday.

Envelopes are available at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall. Thanking you in advance for your making this another beautiful Christmas season.

For names to be included in the Christmas bulletins, donations must be received by Sunday, December 16th.

St. Anne's Altar Guild



An Opportunity for Giving

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

Donation envelopes will be available at the back of the church beginning the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

For names to be included in the Christmas bulletins, donations must be received by Sunday, December 16th.

Thank You for your support.



It's Christmas Pageant Time!

Rehearsal Schedule

December 2- 9 AM

December 9 - 9 AM

December 16 - 9 AM

December 23rd - 9 AM & 11:45 AM

December 24th

Call Time-4:15 PM

Photo of participants-4:40 PM

(10:15 AM Sunday school will continue without disruption!)

There will be no Sunday school on December 30th.



Thanks to Hayden
and Anne for
representing
Ascension in the Saint
Mark's Gospel Choir
on November 10th!

GREETERS/USHERS NEEDED!

We are in need of greeters/ushers for the 10:15 service.

Please consider helping out the existing families who are serving several times a month by committing to one Sunday a month.

Contact Maggie Outhouse at
maggiemyrne@earthlink.net.



*Community Chorus of Redlands
Jeffrey H. Rickard, Director
presents*

A Concert of Anthems, Readings and Carols of the Season

- *Friday December 7--8:00 pm
First Congregational Church
Cajon and Olive, Redlands*
- *Saturday, December 8--4:00pm
Faith Lutheran Church
12449 California St. Yucaipa*
- *Sunday, December 9--4:00 pm
St. Rita Catholic Church
321 N. Baldwin, Sierra Madre*

• *Free Will Offering at all events* •



Bishop Visit & Confirmation November 18, 2018



We cordially invite you to our

Private Holiday Shopping Party

Date: December 8, 2018

Time: 6:00 p.m.

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

Parking is available on Kersting Court, Baldwin Avenue & Sierra Madre Blvd

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 December 2 to Church of the Ascension

DECEMBER 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 ADVENT BEGINS 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: 1px dashed red; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Episcopal Relief & Development Guest Speaker </div>	3 <div style="background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Fr. Bamberger Out of Office Clergy Support Group </div>	4 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group <div style="text-align: center;"> Gooden Mtg Q&A 10:15am- 11:30am/Hall (Private) </div>	5	6 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	7	8 Funeral & Reception Eugene Miller Church/Hall 10am-2pm (Private) <div style="border: 1px dashed red; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Annual Holiday Shopping Party </div>
9 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	10 8:45—9:20 Gr K-4 Gooden Chapel 9:35—10:15 Gr 5-8 Gooden Chapel <div style="text-align: center;"> Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) in Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm </div>	11 10am Prayer in the Chapel <div style="text-align: center;"> Daisy Troop Mtg 3pm—6pm Hall (Private) </div>	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 <div style="text-align: center;"> Spiritual Direction 10:30—Noon Rector's Office (Private) Piano Rehearsal Hall 4pm-6pm (Private) </div>	15 <div style="text-align: center;"> Piano Recital Hall Noon—3:30pm (Private) </div>
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 <div style="text-align: center;"> Vestry Mtg Hall 7pm </div>	19 9:45am—2:30pm Gooden Drama Classes K-5/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	20 7am Mass 8:05—8:35 Gooden Chapel 9am Forum 10:15am Staff Mtg 3-6pm Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 7:30pm -Choir Rehearsal/Hall	21	22 <div style="background-color: #800000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Church Greening </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> SM Music Holiday Recital Church/Hall 2pm—6pm (Private) </div>
23 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: 1px dashed red; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Sierra Madre Candlelight Walk </div>	24 <div style="border: 1px dashed green; padding: 5px;"> <u>Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services</u> <u>Monday, December 24th</u> ◇ Family Service & Pageant at 5:00pm ◇ Hymns & Carols at 10:30pm ◇ Midnight Mass at 11:00pm <u>Tuesday, December 25th</u> ◇ Mass at 11:00am *NO CHILDCARE* </div>	25	26 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	27 7am Mass 9am Forum 3-6pm Organist Rehearsal/Sanctuary 7:30pm -Choir Rehearsal/Hall	28	29
Parish Administrator OUT OF OFFICE						
30 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 9am-10am-Between the Masses Discussion Group 10:00am Childcare 10:15am Mass 2pm EFM Mtg/Library *NO SUNDAY SCHOOL* Private Family Party Hall/Kitchen-3pm—9pm	31 <div style="text-align: center;"> NEW YEAR'S EVE OFFICE OPEN FROM 9AM—NOON </div>	<div style="border: 1px dashed red; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> NEW YEARS DAY OFFICE CLOSED </div>				