



# The JULY SPIRE 2021

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



## Upcoming Events

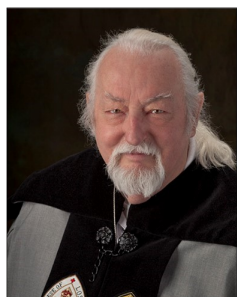
\*Please see the calendar on page 4 for an updated list of events.\*

**Blood Drive  
at Church of  
the Ascension  
on July 14<sup>th</sup>.**

See page 3  
for details.



**Memorial Service for Mike  
Beach will be held on  
Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup> at 4pm.**



If you plan to attend, please  
call or email the parish office  
so we can get a head count.

parish@ascension-sierramadre.com  
626-355-1133

## From the Rector

Some of you may know that on June 20<sup>th</sup> this year, I marked the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being ordained to the transitional diaconate. Debbie, Chris, and I were blessed by the visit of our friends Steve and Judy Leonetti. Steve and I were in that 1981 ordination class together. (Steve preached here at Ascension on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Steve and Judy are Christopher's god-parents.)

I was ordained to the priesthood in December of 1981 apart from the rest of the class so that I could celebrate Christmas with the congregation in Needles where I was the Vicar.



Priesthood ordination in Needles



Fr. Michael and Fr. Steve Leonetti



The Bamberger's and the Leonetti's

Over the last forty years, I have served with four diocesan bishops – Robert Rusack, Fred Borsch, Jon Bruno, and John Taylor -- and a bunch of suffragan bishops and assisting bishops. I must have worked with a couple dozen Junior and Senior Wardens, eight or nine musicians, six parish administrators, and a dozen or more clergy associates.

I have been very blessed by the support I have received over the years. Floods, fires, earthquakes, and the odd pandemic have kept ministry interesting.

It is unusual in the Episcopal Church for a priest to serve in one congregation for over thirty years. There are disadvantages – just ask my successor in a few years. But for me, the blessings come in knowing families over generations. I have the privilege of being included in burials, baptisms, weddings, anniversaries, graduations, divorces and remarriages, illnesses, and all of the life events that mark our lives together. Forty years into this deal, I am very grateful.

Blessings,  
MAB+



Fr. Michael and Fr. Rick Byrum at the Station Fire



Fr. Ruth, Fr. Delgado, Fr. Larson,  
Fr. Wood, Mother Beal, and Fr. Gomez



Deacon Ed, Mother Robin, and Fr. Michael

March 1992



## JUNE 2021

### Pledge Payment Snapshot



YTD Budget:	\$110,500
YTD Actual:	\$118,440
Difference:	\$7,940

## NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Congregational song returns to Ascension – praise be! Beginning with July 11, the 10:15 service will incorporate hymns and service music to be sung by all of us in attendance ~ and I for one couldn't be happier! Along with many of you, I've felt a serious void in my life for the past fifteen months with the absence of sacred song; so let's prepare by warming up our vocal chords in the coming days in order that we may sing to the Lord with all of our hearts.

Together let's celebrate the waning of the pandemic by joining our voices on the 11<sup>th</sup> ~ the choir will be remaining on summer hiatus, so I look forward to hearing you, the congregation, join with the organ in praise to God.

From Psalm 96: *Oh sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.*



**Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist**



"God comes to us disguised as our life." Paula D'Arcy.

This is one of those quotes that forces you to slow down and ponder the depth of wisdom contained within it. You can read it a thousand times and still find yourself drawn deeper into its truth and insight.

Right now, however, the message in that quote is not what I want to hear.

I like the idea of finding God in the wonder of creation, the eloquence of a poem, or the beauty of a song.

It's also easy for me to picture myself finding God through reading the Bible or in an inspirational book.

In essence, I like the idea of finding God out there or away from me and my life.

But what if God is far closer to home?

What if God is most powerfully and clearly to be found in the midst of my messy, broken, exhausting, hurting, sinful life? Life is hard these days for many of us and for many reasons. Our post-pandemic world also presents perplexing new challenges and, in some cases, seems to magnify the old ones. Take a moment and list a few of your own challenges:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

This time is as hard as I can ever remember life being for so many of us. Every day I hear people, and people I usually consider to be strong and on top of things, tell me, "I'm shattered, weary, and desperately hoping and praying for things to turn around."

And then I read a quote like: "God comes to us disguised as our life."

How on earth is God in all of this, though? And what am I meant to be discovering about God in the midst of everything my family, friends, and neighbors are going through right now?

I have no idea. Well, maybe I do. If you were offered the opportunity to sit down with God, let's say over coffee, and have a heart-to-heart chat, would you accept the invitation? You bet you would...who doesn't have something to say to God. Sometimes, we confuse talking to God with prayer – another subject for another time. The point is that if we listen to each other without judgement, just listen, and experience everything around us without judgement, and just see life for what it is and not for what we expect or even want it to be, I suspect we'll experience God in wondrous and new ways, talking and listening to us ever so attentively.

Solutions, God's solutions are right there in the midst of it all. Remember God is a master of disguise! So, stop looking and wondering what he's up to and remember to always thank God for all that is happening at this time and place in your life because rest assured, he's in the middle of it and is doing and saying something.

Be well, be blessed, and be willing to be surprised by God.

**Deacon Ed+**



## Blood Drive The Episcopal Church of the Ascension

Location: Parish Hall  
25 E Laurel Ave  
Sierra Madre, CA 91024

**Wednesday, July 14, 2021**  
**12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Please visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) and enter sponsor code: ECTA to schedule an appointment.

\*Appointments Preferred\*



Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.



**Share the vibe. Give blood to help save lives.**

Download the Blood Donor App | [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) | Call 1-800-RED CROSS

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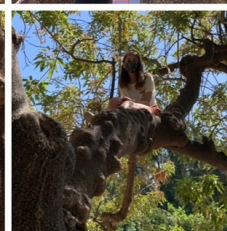
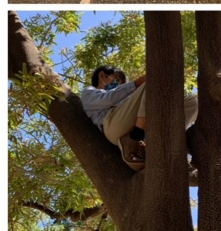
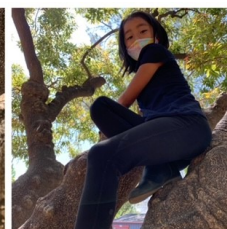
*It's summertime...*

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



**Thank You!**

**Sunday, June 6<sup>th</sup> ~ 10:15 Mass**



## Get ready for the Friends In Deed Back to School Backpack and School Supply Drive

Bring your donations to the Church any  
time before Wednesday, July 21<sup>st</sup>.



This year's needs are :

- Backpacks--new sturdy backpacks (no red or blue colors please)
- 3-Ring binders
- Tab Dividers
- College ruled notebook paper
- Spiral notebooks
- Pencils
- Dry erase markers
- Colored Pencils
- Crayola Crayons (24 pack)
- Rulers
- Glue Sticks



Friends In Deed will distribute to school aged children in need. Help kids be prepared, feel confident, and have a successful school year.



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](http://www.ascension-sierramadre.com)

## JULY 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 8:15am Mass  9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office	2	3
4  <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> w/ <u>Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> w/ <u>Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	5  <b>4TH OF JULY OBSERVED * PARISH OFFICE CLOSED</b>	6	7  5:30pm Yoga/Hall	8 8:15am Mass  9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office	9	10
11  <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> w/ <u>Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> w/ <u>Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  <b>4PM—MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR MIKE BEACH</b>	12	13	14  <b>12PM—6PM BLOOD DRIVE IN HAWKS HALL</b>	15 8:15am Mass  9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office  10:30am Staff Meeting	16	17
18  <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> w/ <u>Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> w/ <u>Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	19	20  7:30pm Vestry Meeting	21  5:30pm Yoga/Hall	22 8:15am Mass  9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office	23	24
25  <u>8am Indoor Worship</u> w/ <u>Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Indoor Worship</u> w/ <u>Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	26	27	28  5:30pm Yoga/Hall	29 8:15am Mass  9am Rector's Forum Rector's Office  10:30am Staff Meeting	30	31