



# The July 2022 SPIRE

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



## Upcoming Events

**\*Please see the calendar on page 8 for an updated list of events.\***



## From the Rector

The last several weeks have certainly been eventful. Supreme Court rulings, Congressional hearings, incidents of gun violence (and welcomed Congressional response), drought, the war in Ukraine – the list just seems to go on and on. For some of us, there is a sense of asking where do we begin to respond? I know some of our folks have participated in marches and vigils. Others have written letters to the editor. I know some of the news just seems overwhelming.

You may recall last month I dragged out the old piece of wisdom about how does one eat an elephant? (One bite at a time.) I am grateful that Carol Rasmussen and Charley Noecker found one thing to do to try to make a difference. (You can read Carol's Spire article and understand that this task will be a work in progress.) The world-wide refugee crisis is a humanitarian disaster the like of which has not been seen since World War II. If we can help even one family from Afghanistan, we'll be taking a bite.

But there is more we can do locally. We can all conserve water and power. We can work hard to be good neighbors. We can continue to try to keep ourselves safe and those around us safe as the pandemic persists. And we can pray. This coming Sunday, the eve of the Fourth of July, we'll pray specifically for our nation. We'll sing the hymns from the back of the Hymnal 1982 – "National Songs."

And if you need something to cheer you and take your mind off the news, I'll be happy to show you pictures of my granddaughter. She's a very happy baby.

Father Michael+



**The Tuesday Night Dinner Group.**  
Interested in joining us?

Contact Ray Smith for details.

**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!**



## JUNE 2022 Pledge Payment Snapshot



**2022 Budget \$210,000**

YTD Budget: \$105,000

YTD Actual: \$107,605

Difference: \$+2,605

## Altar Flowers and Sanctuary Candles

We would like to remind everyone that you can now sign-up for altar flowers and sanctuary candles online through Signup Genius. You can also sign-up on the sign-up sheets in Hawks Hall.



\*\*\*\*Payment should be made by CHECK (\$40.00 for flowers and \$15.00 for a candle) **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>



Maybe because I'm tired, maybe because I'm feeling stressed, maybe because I'm angry, maybe because I'm afraid of what's next, maybe because of all of that...I keep coming back to Billy Collins poem: "The End of the World." Maybe because it feels like that to so many – the end of the world. Maybe tonight, maybe tomorrow, it will all look a little different. Maybe not, but I still need to hope. We all need to hope!

The End of the World, by Billy Collins

It is a subject so profound I feel I should  
be underwater to think about it properly.  
In the most popular version the sky explodes,  
and horsemen gallop out of the flaming clouds,  
pale and bloody, their cloaks flying wickedly.  
The disconcerting poetry of Revelations describes  
their iron breastplates as being blue as hyacinths.

I have no trouble imagining the oceans boiling away  
like tea water and groves of olive trees turning to ash.  
I can even see wheels revolving within wheels,  
the mouths of furnaces, and a scarlet beast carrying  
the whore of Babylon. I can hear the annunciatory  
trumpets and the groans of those who seek death and  
find it not.

But here in the calm latitudes of this room  
I am thinking that the end could be less operatic.  
Maybe a black tarpaulin, a kind of boat cover,  
could be lowered over the universe one night.  
A hand could enter the picture and crumple the cosmos  
into a ball of paper and hook it into a waste basket.  
A gigantic door might close. A horrible bell could ring.  
We could have fire, ice, bang and whimper all at once.

But who has the time to consider such horrors  
when the world's body keeps pressing up against us  
with the weight of its beauty, its dizzying sea cliffs  
and coasting birds, its rolling fairways and deep pine  
woods?

Who could imagine all this coming to a sudden end  
but the lone visionary we always picture  
on a street corner, gaunt, bearded, holding up  
the sign that bears the news he cannot keep  
to himself: the last headline, the final announcement.

Was it once enough for him to sense the smaller endings?  
To know from the way someone combs her hair  
one morning that the end of love is near;  
to tell by the way the chords make the turn for home  
that the end of a song is fast approaching;  
or to realize by the tone of afternoon light  
that the end of this very day is at hand,  
my brethren, and that the summer trees and clouds  
will never be blown quite the same way again.

Now it is me down on the floor lettering my sign,  
proclaiming that daylight is draining out of the sky.  
This is the message I will carry down the gauntlets of  
the city, my eyes hollow like those of the dungeoned, the  
shipwrecked.

Soon it will be evening, and a fuller darkness will  
descend, just as I have prophesied, and then, according to my  
warnings, we will behold the starry-eyed messiah of the night.

Be well, be blessed, trust in the starry-eyed Messiah of the night.

**Deacon Ed+**



## MUSIC<sub>AT</sub> ASCENSION

### NOTES FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

Mr. Robert L. Williamson

*Organist-Choirmaster*

## Bravo to the Choir !



On June 12th (Trinity Sunday), the Ascension choir finished up the season with great success. This choir came back after an ever evolving pandemic year and a changing of the guard. I want to extend my sincere thanks to all of the choir for their dedication and hard work during the 2021-2022 season.

The Choir was greeted with a reception after church in support of all of their hard work.

I look forward to the 2022-2023 choir season that will resume the Sunday after Labor Day (September 11th).

## These are a few of my Favorite Hymns



I would like to thank those who submitted their favorite hymns for the summer.

As of today, I have receive 36 requests for hymns that will be sung during summer worship. So make sure you come to church and sing your favorite hymn!

## A Patriotic Sunday ~July 3rd



On Sunday July 3, 2022 at 10:15am, we sing your favorite patriotic hymns during worship. The list will include: "God of our Fathers";, "O Beautiful for Spacious Skies" and "My Country tis of Thee" just to name a few.

We will also have guest musicians, Georgia McQuade, Soprano and Jay Cohen, Trumpet to support the festive day of worship.

## Join the Choir



As we gear up for the fall, I would like for everyone to consider joining the choir. The commitment is one day a week (Sunday mornings) and includes rehearsal and singing for service. We meet from September to June each year and sing from Christmas to Easter. If you enjoy singing, then please see me about joining the choir. As a church we are in a rebuilding process after covid and the music program needs your help, so please consider.

*Phil Des  
Flora*



## Friends In Deed 2022-2023 Back-to-School Backpack & School Supply Drive

As the school year ends and summer approaches, we are looking forward to making a fresh start in the fall. The Food Pantry community is pleased that our young students will again return to be with their friends and teachers in the classroom next school year. With anticipation of that return, we have already started planning our annual "Back-to-School" event.

Our FID families continue to face many financial challenges including frustrations over rising prices and supply shortages. Economic instability and the pervasive uncertainties of our time make it even more difficult for families to prepare their children for the new school year. This situation makes our 2022-2023 "Back-to-School" event so vital to the families we serve.

Your participation is more important than ever. Indeed, we cannot do it without you. Every year, we come to you, our Friends In Deed family, to help us make the Back-to-School Backpack & School Supply Drive a success. Last year, we gratefully distributed over 330 backpacks filled with school supplies to school-aged children representing over 60 schools in Pasadena and the neighboring communities. We hope that you will join us in this effort! Your help and support are imperative to the success of this special event.

On two consecutive Saturdays, July 30 and August 6, we will be distributing backpacks and supplies to families in our community. If you would like to support this event, here are some things to consider providing:

1. **Please avoid all red and all blue backpacks. This is very important to our schools.**
2. Backpacks should be sturdy enough to handle the rigors of a student's day and the tremendous supply of books students heft around, especially high school students.
3. The school supplies needed are recommended by the Pasadena/Altadena area schools and the list is included below.
4. Empty backpacks and school supplies must be delivered to Friends In Deed, by Friday, July 22, 2022 in order to be included in the distribution.

**If you are bringing your donations to the church, please deliver them by Wednesday, July 20th.**

- College ruled notebook paper (more popular than "wide-ruled" paper)
- Spiral notebooks
- Composition notebooks
- Hardcover 3-Ring binders: 1"- 3" (prefer with clear view pocket on front)
- Tab dividers for binders
- 2 pocket folders (prefer poly folders)
- Copy paper (for printing)
- Pens: red, blue, and black ink
- Pencils: #2 pencils and mechanical pencils
- Erasers and pencil-top erasers
- Zipper pouches for pens and pencils (3 hole-punched to fit in binders)
- Dry-erase markers
- Colored markers (NO Sharpies or Permanent Markers)
- Highlighters: all colors
- Colored pencils
- Sharpeners for colored pencils (must hold shavings)
- 24 colors crayons (prefer Crayola Brand)
- Student scissors or soft grip student scissors (such as Fiskars)
- Rulers (metric & standard)
- 3" x 5" index cards
- Glue Sticks (preferred to glue in bottles)
- Wide ruled notebook paper (for lower grades)
- Pocket pack tissues
- Hand sanitizer
- and Disinfecting wipes





**American  
Red Cross**



*Join Camp Do Good*

**DONATE BLOOD. HELP SAVE LIVES.**

## **Blood Drive** **The Episcopal Church of the Ascension**

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

**Wednesday, July 13, 2022  
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.

**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.**

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

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## Help Wanted: Welcoming Afghan Refugees to the Los Angeles Area

We have an opportunity to help families from Afghanistan who have just arrived here in the Los Angeles area. These newly resettled families include Afghan allies of the U.S. mission in their country who now would face retaliation and death from the Taliban if they stayed in their country. The families have been resettled by the Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service (IRIS), a program of our Episcopal diocese.

Last week, three families were placed in apartments in Rancho Cucamonga, Santa Ana, and Torrance and a fourth in Riverside County. The families arrived with no furniture or household goods; and when I first spoke with the IRIS' volunteer coordinator last week, they were all still sleeping on the floors of their apartments. Three out of four families have now received donations of beds, and our parish will be delivering beds to the fourth family this week. But they all still need other furniture and kitchen supplies.

Since we only found out about this opportunity last week, we don't know yet what our long-term involvement might include—perhaps English language teaching, help with shopping or paperwork, and otherwise orienting the families to U.S. life skills. But we do know that we can help them by continuing to collect (or helping them shop for) household furnishings under the guidance of the caseworker.

Are you interested in helping welcome these newcomers? If you think this assistance might be something you're called to do, please let me know and I'll send you IRIS' necessary volunteer forms. We expect to have more information in the next few weeks about specific tasks. I think there will be opportunities for all kinds of volunteers; but if you have a special skill that seems likely to be useful, please let me know. The time commitment would be up to you.

Feel free to email or call me with questions, though I don't have many answers at this point. My email is [carol.r@att.net](mailto:carol.r@att.net). As I get more information, I'll pass it on.

By Carol Rasmussen



This coming Sunday is Trinity Sunday (original article was written on June 8), our annual opportunity to celebrate the revelation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It's tempting to try and use this day to explain the Trinity, but perhaps it's better to use this day to sing rousing hymns in praise of the Trinity.



Image of the Holy Trinity from Church of Debra Berhan Selassie, Gondar, Ethiopia / Wikimedia Commons

With all the violence, division, fear, and chaos of our time, it might be easy for us to conclude that delving into the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is irrelevant. Sometimes people say things such as, "people are more important than doctrine." But this is an impoverished view of both the task of theology and the work of loving others.

Doctrine helps us know who God is and how God wants us to live. Doctrine helps me understand our fallen world and the need for a Redeemer. Doctrine challenges me to love those whom I might prefer to ignore.

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity shows us that God has loved us from the beginning of all things, having made this universe in which we live. Jesus Christ is the exact imprint of his Father's very being, showing us everything we need to see about how God loves us and calls us to transformation. The Holy Spirit is the Father's gift to us, as promised by Jesus Christ, and that same Spirit is our guide, our companion, and our teacher.

Though I love a good flowchart, the Holy Trinity is best perhaps understood as God's eternal love for creation and for each one of us. Sure, there is a lifetime of wisdom and inspiration to be gained by studying the relationship among the persons of the Holy Trinity. But while we study and learn, we can also bask in the glory of God and delight in the astounding, unearned gift of God's love for us.

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You see, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not irrelevant to the challenges of our world and of our lives. When I begin to grasp the wondrous mystery of the Holy Trinity, I begin to grasp that God never abandons us, never leaves us alone. And we see that God's desire is for a world that is filled with justice, mercy, hope, and grace. With the power of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to proclaim God's grace and mercy in a world that yearns for a word of hope.

Yours faithfully,



Scott Gunn, Executive Director



Friends In Deed is lower than ever on food. Please join in Ascension's monthly collection of specific "Gold Items". For the month of July we will be collecting cans of Tuna fish.

Look for the donation bin at the back of the church.

### July's Gold Item in TUNA FISH!



### **COFFEE HOURS HAVE RETURNED!** *(rerun from June's newsletter)*

I, for one, am excited that our Church is returning to "normal" following these past three years of the Pandemic. Our choir is back in the loft, our Services resumed in-doors several months ago, and now we are able to enjoy "Coffee Hours" in Hawks Hall.

I will be returning as the "Hospitality Hostess" on a part-time basis to make our events fun, food filling, and festive and to celebrate the many special events we have scheduled according to the Church calendar, such as: Easter Brunch; a Bishop's visit; Pentecost; Blessing of the Animals; An Epiphany Supper; Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, and many more celebrations as those occasions happen.

I also invite all of you to Host a personal coffee hour for yourselves, your family and/or your friends for something special going on in your/their lives, such as: Baptisms, a Milestone Birthday; an Anniversary, or a Graduation. There are many special events that we have in our lives; and if you would like to share with your church family, please do so by hosting a coffee hour.

For a personal coffee hour, the Host may either provide the prepared food or provide the Hospitality Hostess with a budget, and I will prepare the meal (or snacks) and arrange for the Hawks Hall to be set-up and decorated. The only request I have for a personal coffee hour is that the Host provide a clean-up crew of 2 – 4 people. I too will work alongside the clean-up crew to put the Hall and the kitchen back to order.

When it comes to Special Events for the church, the church will sponsor the event and conduct fundraising efforts to help defray the costs.

(Note: The reason for the "part-time" of being your Hospitality Hostess is that I am frequently out of town (generally once a month) and in June we spend 4 – 5 weeks camping, fishing, off-roading in the High Sierras.)

I'm looking forward to making all of these events come to life.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Wagner, Hospitality Hostess





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

## JULY 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
<b>3</b> <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	<b>4</b> <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 	<b>5</b> 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	<b>6</b> 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall 	<b>7</b> 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum  10:30am Staff Mtg	8	9
<b>10</b> <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	<b>11</b> 8:30am Yoga/Hall	<b>12</b> 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	<b>13</b> 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall 	<b>14</b> 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	15	16
PASTOR JOSH/YOUTH MINISTER VACATION						
<b>17</b> <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	<b>18</b> 8:30am Yoga/Hall	<b>19</b> 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets  7:30pm Vestry Meeting Hall	<b>20</b> 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	<b>21</b> 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum  10:30am Staff Mtg	22	23
PASTOR JOSH/YOUTH MINISTER VACATION						
<b>24</b> <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	<b>25</b> 8:30am Yoga/Hall	<b>26</b> 6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	<b>27</b> 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	<b>28</b> 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	29	30
PASTOR JOSH/YOUTH MINISTER VACATION						
<b>31</b> <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*						