



## The March 2023 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.\***



### Lenten Compline

ALL ARE WELCOME

### WEDNESDAYS DURING LENT

7-8PM VIA ZOOM

Please check the weekly update email for the service bulletin

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89006528604>

Reflect & Renew

Please contact JD Neal  
(jd.d.neal@gmail.com) with any questions

### FEBRUARY 2023 Pledge Payment Snapshot



**2023 Budget \$210,000**

YTD Budget: \$33,523

YTD Actual: \$42,291

Difference: \$+8,768

### From the Rector

As I prepared to write this article, I went back and read the Spire articles I had written in March of 2020, 2021, and 2022.

The 2020 article was "rosy." We had had a happy Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, and we were off to a Holy Lent. Little did we know that the world as we knew it was about to change so dramatically. Within just a few weeks, so much changed. We all entered into a long, lonely period.

By March of 2021, we were more optimistic. Vaccines had arrived, and we were about to resume outdoor, in person worship following the winter surge.

For the March 2022 Spire, I wrote about our send-off for Dr. Deb; and I announced that we would be welcoming Robert Williamson.

Now in 2023, many of us are just plain ready to be back to normal. Others of us are still being very Covid cautious. The Emergency restrictions are slowly being lifted. For the time being, I believe we have struck a happy medium. While masks in church are no longer required, they are still encouraged. Facebook Live coverage of our services will continue. The options for receiving Communion will continue. And I am happy to report that I haven't heard of any new Covid cases in the congregation in weeks. (There has been a nasty respiratory bug – not Covid – going around.) Fortunately, one thing Covid has taught us is that when you're not feeling well, stay home.

I will be sad to be bidding farewell to Pastor Josh as he answers a new call. Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> will be his last Sunday with us. I know folks will wish him well. (Jobi will continue on for the time being.)

Finally, I want to thank everyone who contributed to a great Annual Meeting. Lisa Wagner hosted a wonderful potluck. Wendy Stockly took the minutes. Kim Lumino put together the Reports. Thanks to all...

**Father Michael+**

### 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>

## 2023 Vestry Members

### Officers:

**Rector/CEO**  
**Senior Warden**  
**Junior Warden**  
**Clerk of the Vestry**  
**Treasurer (*Budget, Investment*)**

The Very Reverend Canon Michael Bamberger  
 Gordon Tomaske  
 Cameron Cox  
 Wendy Stockly  
 Eric Mulfinger

### Term of Office

<u>2023 Term</u>	<u>2024 Term</u>	<u>2025 Term</u>
Wendy Stockly	Cameron Cox	Eric Mulfinger
Scott Callihan	Jon Prentice	Claudia Foote
Gordon Tomaske	Pam Harrison	TBD



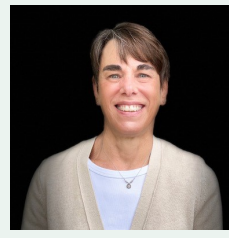
Fr. Bamberger



Eric Mulfinger



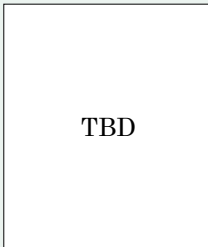
Pam Harrison



Claudia Foote



Jon Prentice



TBD

TBD



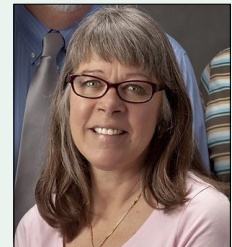
Cameron Cox



Scott Callihan



Gordon Tomaske



Wendy Stockly



My heartfelt thanks to all who made our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper a success! All proceeds will be donated to the Women's Room of Friends In Deed. I especially would like to thank Fr. Michael and J.D. Neal for flipping all those pancakes for us and all those who helped with the clean-up.

Additionally, our Annual Meeting Potluck was also a successful meal and, again, the help with clean-up is so much appreciated by me. Thank you all for your compliments of my picnic theme.

Respectfully,  
**Lisa Wagner**  
 Hospitality Hostess





There have been times in my life when things seemed just fine and everything was going as planned. The universe, God, and I were all on the same page. Simply put, I couldn't ask for more – or so I thought. Yet I am reminded constantly that it may be a mistake to believe that there is nothing within that is in need of radical change and new direction.

During the 1980's after my self-imposed exile from organized religion, I embraced the Episcopal Church. I realize now that the experience of conversion is not limited to moving from one faith stance in life to another. That is the external understanding of being a convert. In a very real sense, we are all converts because we are all called to change.

During our lifetimes, events occur which may cause us either pain or pleasure. At first, we don't always understand why these experiences are happening or the significance they hold for us. Sometimes meeting another person can determine our destiny, an event that may seem insignificant to others but not to us. Often it is only later that we discern Christ's presence - God's hand in it. That realization is our reward for having believed while we did not see. Such experiences can shape our passage to a greater relationship with God.

The season of Lent is a perfect opportunity to discern if and how you are being called to change. Ask yourself when have you been surprised by God? What were the experiences of life that invited you to think and respond in new ways? Are any of those same kinds of events and experiences at work in your life today? Are you being called to something more?

The following quote from Thomas Merton may help you along the way:

"You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope."

Be well, be blessed, be surprised.

Deacon Ed+



## SAVE THE DATE

### Afternoon Tea Fundraiser

Saturday, the Twentieth of May,

In the year of our Lord,

Two Thousand Twenty-Three

One O'clock in the Afternoon

Church of the Ascension

Hawks Hall

*(All proceeds will benefit our Hospitality Account.*

*Additional information will be in the April Spire.)*







# MUSIC<sub>AT</sub> ASCENSION

NOTES FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

Mr. Robert L. Williamson

*Organist-Choirmaster*

## Musical Outreach to the Community

### *An Evening with Rachmaninoff*

All over the world, pianists and musicians are celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Sergei Rachmaninoff, one of the most popular composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Concert pianist Nicholas Galinaitis will bring a selection of solo piano works by Rachmaninoff and other composers to Church of the Ascension in Sierra Madre on Saturday, March 25, 2023 at four o'clock in the afternoon. He will play a variety of music including the famous second sonata in B Flat minor, Op. 36, a piece heavily influenced by the second sonata of Chopin and made famous by pianists Vladimir Horowitz and Van Cliburn. Sergei Rachmaninoff, an émigré from Russia who lived in Beverly Hills in the 1940s, has a special place in Galinaitis's repertoire. He has been playing music of Rachmaninoff ever since he first heard and fell in love with it at age 14. Since 2018, he has committed himself to learning the complete solo works. He is deeply committed to exploring the musical possibilities in performing this passionate and virtuosic music, and is excited to share works, both well-known and lesser-known, with audiences everywhere.



**Please join us for an afternoon  
of music and discussion in  
Hawks Hall**

**with**

**Nicholas Galinitis on**

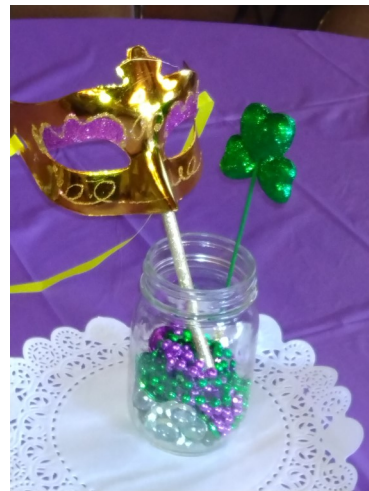
**Saturday, March 25, 2023**

**at 4:00pm**



*Gloria*





## SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

February 21, 2023



Thank You to  
Jon Prentice and  
Lisa Wagner for the  
photos.



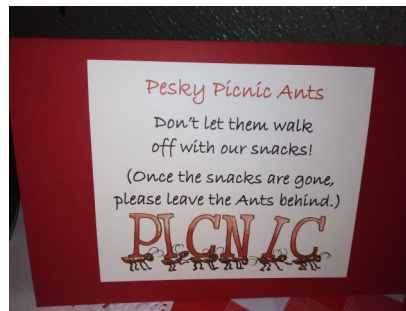


## ANNUAL MEETING

February 26, 2023



Thank You to  
Jon Prentice and Lisa  
Wagner for the photos.



## Another Way to Welcome Refugees: Help Them Keep Clean

We have a new opportunity to help refugees who have just arrived in America and are settling in the Los Angeles basin. The volunteer coordinator at the Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service (IRIS) is looking for donations of welcome bags containing essential paper products and cleaning supplies that we could give to families when they get an apartment. As you're probably well aware, these items aren't cheap. A welcome bag containing one package each of dish detergent, bar soap, laundry soap, dish cloths, scouring pads, toilet paper, and paper towels adds up to almost \$50 at Von's or Ralph's.

I believe our parish could supply at least three welcome baskets to begin with. If you'd like to donate the cost of one, or part of one, make your check payable to Church of the Ascension and put Refugee Welcome Basket in the memo line. If you'd like to shop for a basket yourself, that's great! Use the list above. Please do not buy large packages that would need to be split among multiple bags so that each family can receive an intact package of everything. Smaller packages are fine—a four-pack of toilet paper or 36-ounce bottle of laundry soap, for example. Bring donations to the church and leave them in Hawks Hall. We'll furnish colorful shopping bags to carry the items to our new neighbors.

IRIS will be letting us know of needs for furniture, kitchen wares, etc., as the new families arrive.

Submitted by Carol Rasmussen



## Lenten Goat drive with Episcopal Relief & Development



Goats are hardy, reproduce quickly, and can be raised in a variety of climates to produce staple items such as milk, cheese, and manure for farming. Each goat is \$80...let's get a whole herd! Look for the goat donation box in the church during Lent and please turn in your contributions by Palm Sunday April 2.

## EASTER MUSIC



Please consider making a contribution to our Easter music program. Music offering envelopes are available at the back of the church and on the reception table in Hawks Hall.

*Thank You for your support.*

## EASTER FLOWERS



Although we are only at the beginning of Lent, we eagerly look forward to our glorious Easter celebration in April. In order to make this event as beautiful as possible, we need your generous donations for flowers. Envelopes are at the back of the church, and checks should be made out to Church of the Ascension with Easter Flowers on the memo line.

St. Anne's thanks you in advance for your generosity in helping our Sanctuary look splendid for a Joyous Easter.

**Lynne P Holl, Altar Guild Directress**



## Forward Today: Preparing for Lent

February 8, 2023 Forward Today, Lent, scott gunn

Dear friends in Christ,



Photo by [Wolfgang Kuhnle](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Our journey through Lent begins two weeks from today. Every year, I feel like I need Lent more than ever. It's our annual invitation to renew our commitment as followers of Jesus Christ. In Lent, we can remember what's most important, and we have a whole season to redirect our lives toward Jesus and away from those things which distract us from following him.

The Book of Common Prayer tells us some of the best ways to use this season to point ourselves toward Jesus. We are urged to keep Lent "by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy Word."

Any of us can do these things. We have everything we need, as long as you have a Bible handy. But it's helpful to join in Lenten disciplines with other people. Coming to church on Sundays is a great way to keep Lent. It's also wonderful to gather with others at your church to practice the ancient Christian disciplines of prayer and study.

If you are looking for support for your journey through Lent, Forward Movement has many resources to offer, including [our prayer app or website](#), [Forward Day by Day](#), or any of our [Lenten devotional books](#). Our Lenten devotional books are well-suited both to individual reading and group use. Several of our recent books, including [Signs of Life](#), [The Way of Love](#), [Vital Signs of Faith](#), and [the updated edition of Bible Women](#), would be especially suitable for a Lenten book group.

I encourage you to think about how you wish to savor Lent this year. Now is a great time to reflect on Lent and to make sure you have what you need for this holy season of blessing and renewal.

Yours faithfully  
Scott Gunn  
Executive Director

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

## MARCH 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	2 8:15am Mass	3 8am Gooden Chapel  1:15pm Gooden Chapel	4
5 <b>Vestry Commissioning</b> <u>8am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  9am Choir Rehearsal  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	6 8:30am Yoga/Hall  Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group	7 8:15am Gooden Chapel  6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	8 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall  	9 8:15am Mass  9am Rector's Forum  10:30am Staff Mtg	10	11
					Father Michael Out of Town/Vacation	
12 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  9am Choir Rehearsal  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	13 8:30am Yoga/Hall	14  6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	15 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	16	17	18
Father Michael Out of Town/Vacation						
19 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  9am Choir Rehearsal  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	20 8:30am Yoga/Hall	21 8:15am Gooden Chapel  6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets  Vestry Meeting 7pm Hawks Hall	22 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	23 8:15am Mass  9am Rector's Forum  10:30am Staff Mtg	24	25  Rach Maninoff Concert 4pm Hawks Hall
Father Michael Out of Town/Vacation						
26 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*  9am Between the Masses Discussion Group  9am Choir Rehearsal  <u>10:15am Worship w/Eucharist</u> *Facebook Live*	27 8:30am Yoga/Hall  6:30pm-9:30pm Photochromers Mtg-Hall Private	28 8:15am Gooden Chapel  6Pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets  Noon Clericus Mtg Hall	29 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	30 8:15am Mass  9am Rector's Forum	31	