



The November 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.

REMINDER



Daylight Savings Time ends at 2am on Sunday, November 5th.

FRIENDS IN DEED*

Please join in Ascension's monthly collection of specific "Gold Items" for

Friends in Deed. For the month of **November** we will be collecting canned veggies, stuffing mix, pie fixings (canned pumpkin/fruit), and crust mixes

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



From the Rector

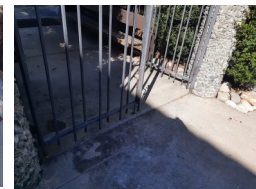
There are many places around our campus that are dear to many of us. Our beautiful sanctuary is one of the places that immediately comes to mind. It is so visually unique that it is very memorable. Almost every week, we have tourists come by on a "The Fog" pilgrimage, and these visitors always want to see the interior of the church.

Another place that is very special to many of us is the Memorial Garden. We have dozens of loved ones buried there. More than a year ago, we began an effort to enhance the Memorial Garden. New roses were planted, the rock work was improved, and the area around the fountain was redone. A plaque attributing the fountain to Lew Watanabe was also installed.

Now facing us is the challenge of cracks and spaces in the Garden path where the slabs of concrete have shifted. These cracks, of course, are a safety hazard, one that is only going to get worse. We have a plan to address this situation. Our Memorial Garden maintenance guy – Darren Odin – is cutting the concrete in the affected spots, and those spaces will be filled with flat stones very similar to the stones on the south side of the church. Once the flagstones set, the cracks and uneven spots will be leveled out. Needless to say, this endeavor will cost money.

I invite you to help with this cost by making a specific contribution to the Memorial Garden Fund. At this time of year, we should all be prayerfully considering our giving to the church in general and to the specific needs of this special place.

Father Michael+



GATHERING OF SAINTS

On **Sunday November 5th**, All Saints Sunday, we will have a single service at 9:30 am followed by a hearty breakfast in Hawks Hall. We are calling this Sunday the "Gathering of the Saints" and it is all about YOU!

In place of the sermon, we will have a discussion facilitated by Fr. Michael and Deacon Ed designed to help us share our thoughts on

- Why we love our community
- What events and ministries we look forward to over the course of the year
- How to reenergize ourselves for the work ahead

This gathering will be our chance to remind ourselves of what we love about Ascension, to generate excitement for the road ahead, and to enjoy each other's company over a nice meal.

Please plan on joining us for this special event.

Gordon Tomaske, Senior Warden, Church of the Ascension

October 2023 Pledge Payment Snapshot



2023 Budget \$210,000

YTD Budget: \$167,613

YTD Actual: \$161,629

Difference: \$ - 5,984

Stewardship 2023 is Upon Us!

Each year we recommit ourselves to the church by pledging our time, talent, and treasure. As Senior Warden, my job is to push all three of these items; but because I also help with the budget, I do tend to focus on the treasure portion. This year, however, the Vestry is approaching things just a bit differently.

Yes, I will be making a stewardship speech, and I will be asking for your pledge cards (followed by the usual weekly reminders about getting your pledge cards in!). But this year we will kick off the stewardship season with a “Gathering of the Saints” on Sunday, November 5th (All Saints Sunday) at 9:30am. During this service, Fr. Michael and Deacon Ed will lead the congregation in a discussion of what we love about our community and how we can grow and energize Ascension for the future. We will have just one service that Sunday with a potluck immediately following.

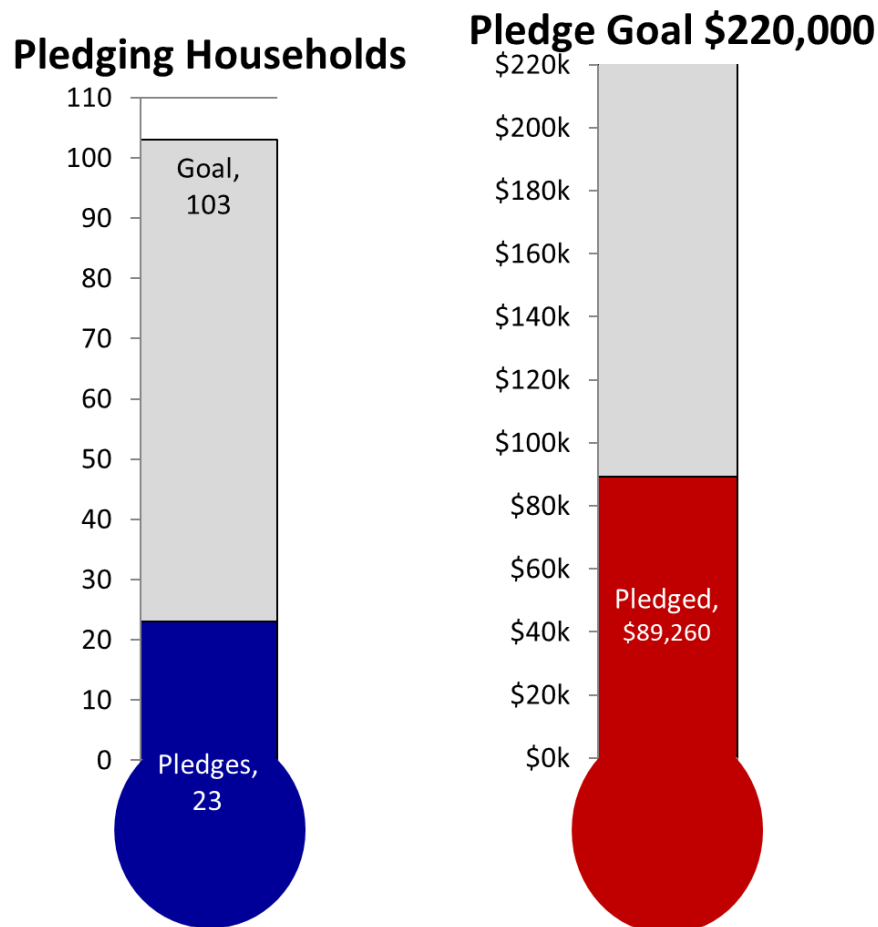
In order to develop a workable revitalization plan, our Clergy and Vestry want and need to hear from you. So, bring yourselves, your ideas, and a healthy appetite. Let us use this stewardship season to celebrate, strengthen, and grow our community at Ascension.

Thank you,
Gordon Tomaske
 Senior Warden



Stewardship Update

The numbers as of October 31, 2023



A Note on Financial Stewardship

You know that your financial pledge is essential to keeping the Church of the Ascension supportive and strong. It allows us to budget for the coming year and helps us determine our priorities. But you may not be aware of the many ways you can provide financial support to our parish. First off, you should be getting a pledge card in the mail or you can pick one up at church. Return the card to us in the offering plate at one of the services or drop it off at the parish office. You can also make your pledge on the parish website by going to <https://www.ascension-sierramadre.com/give.html>.

When fulfilling your pledge by check or cash, make sure your name and envelope/account number are clearly marked. To get your offering to church you can:

- ◇ Drop an envelope with cash or a check into the offering plate during the service
- ◇ Call the office and drop a donation off with Kim Lumino at any time during the week (except Wednesdays)
- ◇ Arrange on your bank's website for Ascension to receive automatic payments from your checking or savings account in the amount you designate. Simply add "Church of the Ascension, 25 E. Laurel Avenue, Sierra Madre, CA 91024" as an automatic payee in the amount and frequency you choose. When prompted for an account number, you can use your Ascension envelope/account number.



SO MANY OPTIONS
FOR GIVING!

In addition, you can donate outside of your pledge by donating:

- ◇ A financial gift to support a parish project like the roof replacement or other maintenance
- ◇ Appreciated Stock. If you have appreciated stock, you may donate that to the parish and get a tax deduction while avoiding capital gains. Check with the parish office for more information and your accountant for details on the tax implications
- ◇ A car. Over the last few years, Ascension has accepted cars as donations with approximately 70% of the proceeds going to the church. Call the parish office for details
- ◇ Planned giving. When creating your will or trust, please remember your parish family in your arrangements.

From all of us at Ascension, thank you for your time, talent, and treasure. God's peace.

MEN'S MONTHLY LUNCHEON

Wednesday, Nov 1st @ Noon
Nano Café
RSVP to Fr. Michael



"Between the Masses" Discussion Group

All are welcome to join a group of parishioners meeting weekly in Hawks Hall on Sundays in the 9 to 10 am Coffee Hour for spiritual (and perhaps "spirited") discussion of pre-assigned readings (usually brief!) on a wide variety of Christian themes. Reading selections are determined by the group itself. Please feel free to join the group even if you have not read the week's reading selection.

To get the reading selection emailed to you, please email Gordon and Diane Tomaske at gdtomaske@sbcglobal.net.



I began my last homily with the following question I find myself asking over and over again: “What gets in the way of my loving my neighbor – of me loving you?” Perhaps it’s fear; perhaps it’s panic. To that I would add, perhaps its **anger** and not knowing what to do with my anger.

We often get the message that anger is what our spiritual practices should be able to get rid of, that we should be able to transform it into pure sweet compassion. But what if instead of seeing anger as an abhorrent emotional state, we considered the spiritual meaning of anger. What if we viewed anger not as an enemy, but as a dear friend? Understanding the spiritual meaning of anger and accepting its message can be liberating.

Anger, writes psychotherapist Robert Augustus Masters in his book *Spiritual Bypassing*, is “the primary emotional state that functions to uphold our boundaries.” When we feel anger, it’s an indication that something is wrong—a boundary has been crossed or a need is not being met. It’s not always just about our individual selves either—anger is the appropriate response to oppression. (from my October 29, 2023 homily: setting boundaries is a valid Christian response).

Anger is an emotion like any other, and we have as much right to feel it as to feel sadness or joy. Actually, we have about as much “right” to feel any emotion as we do to experience hunger or thirst. We don’t choose what to feel; we just feel. Our choice lies in what we do with the emotion.

Many spiritual traditions, Masters explains, insist we transform our anger into compassion, implying that anger is not a “spiritual” emotion. This idea confuses anger with aggression, the emotion with “what is actually done with anger.” Anger can actually be an expression of compassion, a willingness to uphold boundaries that are sacred or to stand up for someone who is being oppressed. Compassion and anger can absolutely coexist.

Anger is not an action, though one of its characteristics may be the urge to do something and to do it fast. Anger can help us overcome fear in order to take some action. So how do we know what action to take?

First, we must slow down. We must be still. Being still is incredibly challenging.

There are two types of anger. Righteous anger is very calm and grounded and knows exactly what must be done. It’s also very rare. Much more common is anxious anger, which is fidgety and confused, impatient for action. This response usually comes because anxious anger is mixed up with fear or hurt (or both), and the anger is trying to find a way out of feeling those other things. Sitting still enables those other emotions to surface.

And so, we must sit still. We must listen to the message of the anger even if all it knows is that something is wrong. We have to give it a chance to talk to us, to dialogue with it, even ask it some questions. What boundary has been crossed? What needs can we address right now? Can we be honest about those needs while showing compassion for the other person’s viewpoint?

Anger may be quick to place blame on someone else; but if we can slow down enough to try to identify what boundaries have been crossed, we may be able to see the situation more clearly with compassion for ourselves and others.

In Masters’s view, spirituality is not about finding ways to avoid or eradicate our feelings. Its work is deeply emotional in nature, and it’s about getting close enough to ourselves that we can see to the heart of what’s happening, be honest about it, and care for ourselves and each other to the best of our ability. Rejecting our emotions is not the path. Listening closely to the messages of the heart and honoring them, even and especially when they are uncomfortable to sit with—that’s the spiritual meaning of anger.

“If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow”: Rilke.

Be well, be blessed, embrace your anger.

Deacon Ed+

THANKSGIVING

FOR EACH NEW MORNING WITH ITS LIGHT,
 FOR REST AND SHELTER OF THE NIGHT,
 FOR HEALTH AND FOOD,
 FOR LOVE AND FRIENDS,
 FOR EVERYTHING
 THY
 GOODNESS SENDS.
 -RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)



15th Annual Women's Room Thanksgiving Luncheon

We are so excited to host the Thanksgiving Luncheon for the Women's Room at Friends in Deed for the 15th year running! Even though things have changed due to the rippling effects of Covid-19, we have continued to be able to provide lunch for our friends at The Women's Room.

The Luncheon will be on **Monday, November 20** and will be held at Friends in Deed in the parking lot, should weather permit. We will be serving 50-60 women that day, plus the FID staff and volunteers, so will need lots of food, goodies, servers, set-up crews and clean-up crews. This will be more like our original luncheon than the last few years have been and we can't wait!

Food contributions may be delivered to Ascension Church (25 E Laurel Ave, Sierra Madre) on Sunday, November 19 between 8am-2pm (please be sure to cover and label your contribution clearly--including reheating instructions if necessary, and any special dietary labels--gluten free, vegetarian/vegan, etc.). Food may also be delivered to Ascension on Monday morning (Nov 20) between 8am-9:30am. If you need to coordinate a different time for food delivery, please contact Nicole Hanson (626-627-4681) or Lisa Wagner (626-710-8909).

All quantities given are approximate. Feel free to adjust based on your recipe and experience. Each food item contribution should include approximately 20-25 servings and should arrive in a DISPOSABLE foil half-size steam pan (approx. 12"x10"x4") or full-size steam pan (approx. 20"x12"x3").

To sign up, please visit: <https://bit.ly/TWR-Thanksgiving2023>, or sign up on the sign-up sheet in Hawks Hall.

Nicole Hanson and Lisa Wagner

We cordially invite you to our

Private Holiday Shopping Party

Date: Saturday, November 18

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 November 10
 to The Ascension Office or to Jean Rowe
 at jeanhrowe@verizon.net or (626-533-2384)



Halloween Potluck Sunday, October 29, 2023



Thank you to Jon
Prentice for the
photos.



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.

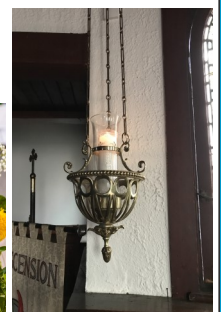
Here are the sign-up genius links:

Sanctuary Candles:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E44A4A628A7F94-sanctuary1>

Altar Flowers:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E44A4A628A7F94-altar1>



Blessing of the Animals Sunday, October 15, 2023



Thank you to Jon
Prentice for the
photos.



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

NOVEMBER 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall Men's Group Luncheon Nano Café Noon—RSVP to Fr. Michael	2 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	3	4
5 9:30am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* Gathering of the Saints Mass	6 8:30am Yoga/Hall Fr. Bamberger Out of Office / Clergy Support Group	7 6pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	8 8:15-9:45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	9 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum	10 Diocesan Convention/Riverside	11
12 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	13 8:15am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	14 6pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	15 8:15-9:45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	16 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum 10:15am Staff Mtg	17	18 6pm Holiday Shopping Party at Savor the Flavor- *RSVP Required*
19 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	20 8:30am Yoga/Hall	21 6pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets Vestry Meeting 7pm/Hall	22 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	23 THANKSGIVING DAY 9:30am Mass	24 *PARISH OFFICE CLOSED*	25
26 8am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live* 9am Between the Masses Discussion Group 9am Choir Rehearsal 10:15am Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*	27 8:15am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall	28 6pm Tuesday Night Dinner Group Meets	29 8:15-9:45am Gooden Chapel 8:30am Yoga/Hall 5:30pm Yoga/Hall	30 8:15am Mass 9am Rector's Forum Clericus Mtg Noon/Hall		