



# The SPIRE 2021

*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.\*

### Church Photo Directory



**LAST CALL** for  
photos and  
updated  
contact  
information!

We are in the process of updating the parish directory. Please email any updated information to the church office at [parish@ascension-sierramadre.com](mailto:parish@ascension-sierramadre.com).

## SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, November 20th

**Savor the Flavor Holiday Shopping Party**



## SEPTEMBER 2021 Pledge Payment Snapshot



**2020 Budget \$221,000**

YTD Budget:	\$165,750
YTD Actual:	\$157,909
Difference:	\$-7,841

## From the Rector

Sometimes when I'm preparing to write my article for the Spire, I will look back at the previous year's article or even an article from a few years back. I did this getting ready to write to you this month.

A year ago, I wrote about how glad we were to be back worshipping in person – albeit outside. At that point, we were eight months into our experience of pandemic. I reflected on the emotional toll that COVID was playing in our lives. And here we are now, 20 months since we shut down in March of 2020.

As frustrated as we all are, there are glimmers of hope. More and more people are being vaccinated, and I'm hearing stories of our folks getting their booster shots. It looks very promising that our younger children will soon be able to get their vaccines.

A year ago, we were contemplating our Christmas services being held outdoors. This year, we'll be back inside our comfortable and comforting church. I'm in conversation with couples who are now starting to plan for a wedding. We're starting to make plans for a coffee hour after our services. The Tuesday Night Dinner group is again thriving. Most of our parish meetings are in-person.

While it has been a long year for all us since last October, I have to remind myself to keep optimistic and hopeful. I also have to remember to be grateful. There are occasions of joy to be experienced, and for those I am thankful.

A year ago, I concluded my article with these words – "Know that you are in my prayers. Know that I long for us to be reunited. Know that I believe that this period of our lives will pass, and the familiar will reappear." I still believe this to be true.

MAB+

## Blessing of the Animals



Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>

**11:45 am in the Outdoor Worship Area**

Blessing of the Animals is conducted in commemoration of the October 4th Feast Day of St. Francis of Assisi. St. Francis, arguably the most beloved of the named Saints, was particularly fond of animals of all breeds. The community is invited to bring your animals, no matter how big or small, breed or religion. Some animals may require a leash or a container, so keep that in mind.

**All of God's creatures are welcome!**



## Caring For Each Other Always ~ Stewardship 2022

I was baptized and confirmed in my late twenties; and I still regard these sacraments, along with communion, as central to my experience as a Christian. But I knew I was truly part of a Christian community when I was asked to serve. At first, I was asked to carry up bread and wine prior to communion. Later I was asked to help repair the home of an elderly parishioner, and finally I was asked to formally serve on a church board.

Each of these areas of service represents a tangible act done out of devotion to a community of faith which loves a God who first loved us. When we care for the person sitting next to us or the shut in or the children during service or tend to maintaining our buildings and grounds, we are exercising the body of Christ for all to see and at the same time binding the parts of that body closer together. Most of all, when we serve in Christ's name, we are making God's presence real to each other.

This stewardship season we will be focusing on how we care for each other at Ascension. Caring for each other includes caring for our worship, our church and its property, and, most of all, how we care for each other. Let us use this season to reflect on how a life of service to God creates a stronger community at Ascension.

**Gordon Tomaske**  
Sr. Warden



### As disasters multiply, Episcopal organizations and others offer ways to help

War, fires, hurricanes, earthquakes and more have recently caused enormous suffering in locations throughout the world. Here are some resources to guide Episcopalians on how to help:

#### Episcopal Relief & Development

This highly-regarded organization has been relieving suffering and helping rebuilding efforts since it was founded after World War II as The Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief. It has an excellent rating among charity organizations, and is backed by the full Episcopal Church. It is especially active at this time in Haiti and communities in the path of Hurricane Ida. Learn more [here](#).

#### Haiti relief

As Haitians deal with the aftermath of the Aug. 14 earthquake, many organizations are active in helping with immediate relief and rebuilding efforts. In this Episcopal News [story](#) from Aug. 25 is a list of charities and businesses endorsed by diocesan staff members who have strong ties with the Haitian people. Learn more [here](#).

#### Aid for refugees from Afghanistan

See these stories for suggestions on how to help the Diocese of Los Angeles' own IRIS (Interfaith Immigration & Refugee Service) and the churchwide Episcopal Migration Ministries assist refugees and asylees.

- **Short-staffed but determined, IRIS works overtime to assist refugees from Afghanistan, other nations**
- **EMM seeks churchwide support to provide warm welcome to Afghans in U.S.**

#### Northern California wildfires

Sacramento-based KCRA3 News has compiled a list of organizations aiding people affected by the disastrous Dixie and Caldor fires in the northern half of California. Generally, organizations request monetary gifts rather than in-kind items. The charities, including the Red Cross, offer many kinds of support, including housing for the displaced, care for animals fleeing the fire, and care for firefighters and other first responders. Learn more [here](#).



## Resource Roundup

News and notes for clergy, wardens, administrators  
and lay professionals of the Diocese of Los Angeles

9/21/21

## 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:

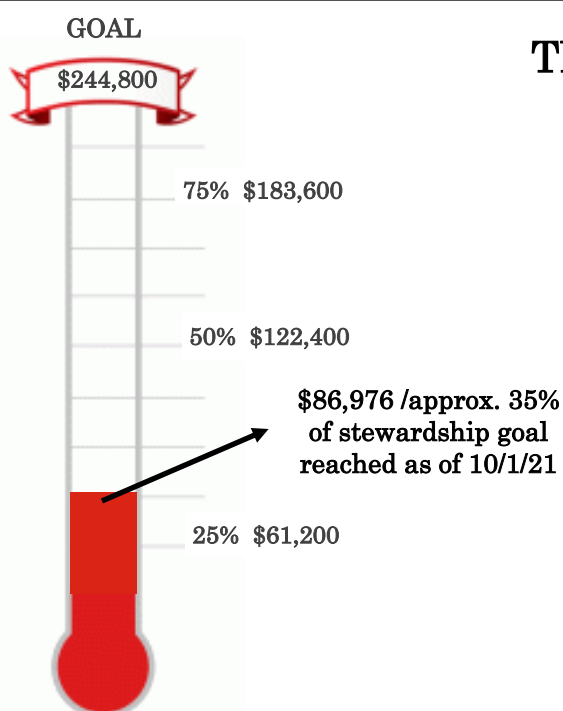
- ◇ Drop an envelope with cash or a check into the offering plate during the service
- ◇ Call the office and drop a donation off with Kim Lumino at any time during the week (except Wednesdays)
- ◇ Arrange on your bank's website for Ascension to receive automatic payments from your checking or savings 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.



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

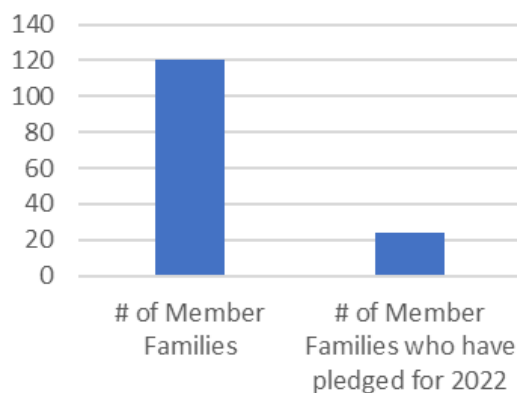
- ◇ A financial gift to support a parish project like the roof replacement or other maintenance
- ◇ Appreciated Stock. If you have appreciated stock, you may donate that to the parish and get a tax deduction while avoiding capital gains. Check with the parish office for more information and your accountant 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.

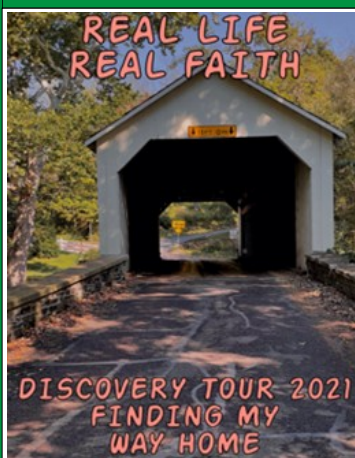
From all of us at Ascension, thank you for your time, talent, and treasure. God's peace.



## The numbers as of October 1, 2021

Chart of progress toward 100% commitment pledges turned in





“Sing to God a brand-new song. He’s made a world of wonders. He rolled up his sleeves, He made things right.” (Psalm 98)

I’ve been on the journey of a lifetime during the last year, and particularly the last few weeks. Those of you who follow me on Face Book know I dubbed the journey “Discovery Tour 2021.” But that’s not the beginning nor the end of the story by any means. There will be more, as life is indeed a continuous discovery when we put our trust in the Lord and know in our hearts that God is always leading the way. Of course, it’s also a matter of believing that to truly discover what God has made right, what God is up to in our lives, we must learn to follow his lead. We must be willing to do the work, accept the pain, and embrace the hope, the hope which is perhaps God’s greatest gift to us.

Every story, every journey has a beginning. This is my story. It’s my firm belief that if I tell myself my truth and share that truth, it enables others to share their truths. By sharing our truths, we tell our stories; and in telling our stories, we discover a world of

wonders. We discover ourselves and, most importantly, our connection, our bonds to each other. Like Jesus, we can roll up our sleeves and make things right.

Now that I think about it, the Discovery Tour actually began when I was just a little kid and started to wonder who I was, where I came from, who were my people, and was I missing out on something even better than what I already had. These questions plague many adoptees from time to time; and for me they stemmed from a place of emptiness, a place of isolation and abandonment. They were the guardians of the woundedness that shaped many of my decisions and beliefs in who I am, who I would become, my value in the eyes of others and, most importantly, my value in God’s eyes.

I was adopted as an infant; and although I had a happy enough childhood, something was missing. As I look back on it now, I see a little boy anxious to please, fearful that he wasn’t good enough. In my heart, I was always packed and ready to be returned to some unknown place.

Those feelings became my demons, my companions who traveled with me into adulthood. We all have our demons; but rather than run from them, rather than trying to escape them, I learned to sit with them, listen to them, and appreciate that they too have needs. I’ve learned that they are often in pain, crying out to be heard, to be healed and comforted. They are a part of who we are, and they are a part of our personal journey. They are, in reality, our friends, our protectors and, believe it or not, have our best interests at heart. They help us to manage our lives and protect us from the pain and trauma that lurk in our deepest beliefs about ourselves, those around us, and the world.

This journey, the discovery tour, took on new meaning, call it a course correction if you like, early in 2018. I found myself ready to discover “me.” Where was I from, who were my people, and where was the imaginary place I was always afraid that I might be returned to? I wanted to ease my pain, my uncertainty, and to truly understand who God created and intended me to be. I longed to know that I belonged.

Along the way, I also discovered that it is only with a hopeful heart and trust in God and in myself that I could find the courage to journey forward, finally unpack, embrace, and welcome the place from where I came. I would know that I was home.

There are many tools available to pursue these truths; and in a moment of hope hatched in prayer, I joined Ancestry.com. I spit in the tube; and, like Alice in Wonderland, my imaginary world started to become real; and the journey of a lifetime began. However, every step along the way was coupled in prayer, personal therapy, and conversation with friends and trusted colleagues.

One does not have to be adopted to embark on a personal discovery tour. Each of us, created in God’s image and likeness, has a true identity deeply grounded in the sacredness that comes from living in Christ as Christ lives in us. As my story unfolds in the months to come, I invite you not only to share in my journey, but also to embark on your own personal journey of discovery. God is always leading us home.

Be well, be blessed, discover.

**Deacon Ed+**



## NOTES FROM THE LOFT

With renewed choral and congregational singing, the loft resounds with joy! I'm particularly grateful for the Psalm once again being chanted by the choir with congregational singing of the antiphon. The full complement of organ voluntaries, hymns, Psalms, service music, and anthems combine to knit together a truly mystical worship experience. Anthems for the month of October include:

The 3<sup>rd</sup>: *O How Amiable* by the well-known Brit, Ralph Vaughan Williams, 20<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> centuries

The 10<sup>th</sup>: the beloved *A Gaelic Blessing* by John Rutter, contemporary British

The 17<sup>th</sup>: *Cantate Domino* by 18<sup>th</sup>-century Italian composer Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni

The 24<sup>th</sup>: another John Rutter work, the lush *A Clare Benediction*

The 31<sup>st</sup>: *Lord in Thy Mercy*, by renowned German musician of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Felix Mendelssohn

*Lord, in thy mercy grant us peace throughout all generations;  
Thou art alone our sword and shield, Lord who dost guide the nations.  
Defend us, O God, we pray thee.  
~ Martin Luther*

 *Debora Huffman*, Director of Music and Organist

### The Choir Returns!



## A Message from St. Anne's Altar Guild ~ Christmas Flowers



While it may only be October, we are looking ahead to Christmas. This year we will come back to a Grand Celebration in the Sanctuary. As with everything, the price for garlands, wreaths, and poinsettias has risen considerably. We are counting on the generous contributions from all of the Parish to make this a truly glorious celebration of our Lord's birth. **(checks should be made payable to Church of the Ascension, marked for Christmas)**

Thank you, Lynne Holl

## Sign-up for Flowers and Sanctuary Candles!

Sign-up using Sign-up Genius (see links below) or in person at the back of the church.

Payments should be made by cash or CHECK (\$40.00 (flowers) and \$15.00 (Sanctuary candle) **\*\*checks 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>



# SUNDAY SCHOOL



**All Ages Sunday School meets weekly!**

We gather at the front door of the church and depart for outdoor class time at 10:15 AM.

Students return to worship for Communion.

**Mark Your Calendar for Sunday School Faith In Action Sundays!**

November 14 - Women's Room Thanksgiving Care Bags

December 12 - Christmas Decorations & Toy Drive

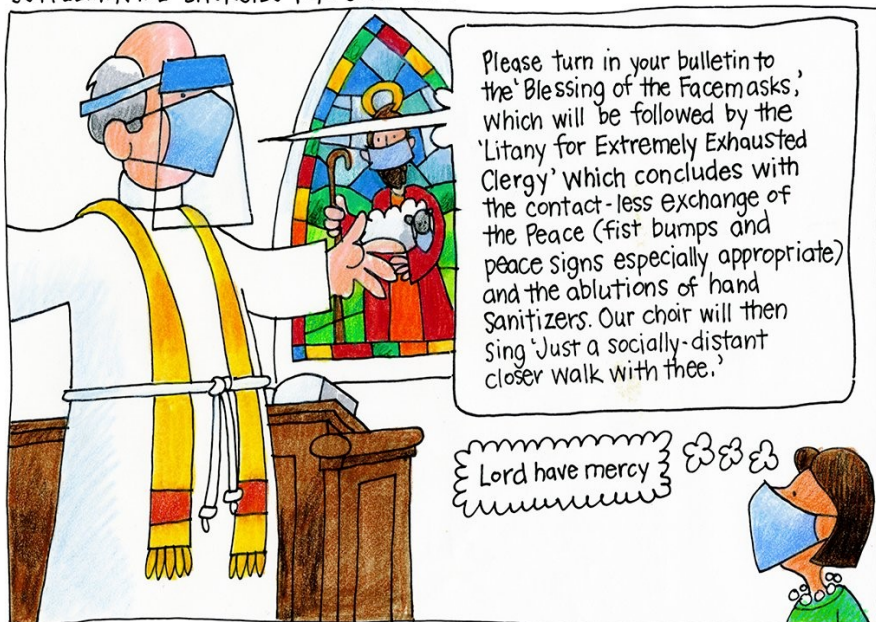
## "Between the Masses" Discussion Group...

Did you know that the Between the Masses Discussion Group is still meeting every Sunday between the services? The group meets 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](mailto:gdtomaske@sbcglobal.net).

## SUPPLEMENTAL LITURGIES FOR COVID-TIDE



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A little Covid humor to share.  
Have a great weekend everyone!

## St. Swithin's

by the Rev. Jay Sidebotham

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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

## OCTOBER 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
<b>3</b> <div>Blessing of the Animals 11:45am</div> <div>8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div> <div>9am Between the Masses Discussion Group</div> <div>10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div>	<b>4</b> <div>8:00am Yoga/Hall</div> <div>1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall</div> <div>Fr. Michael out of office/Clergy Support Group</div>	<b>5</b> <div>11am Gooden Chapel</div> <div>1:15pm Gooden Chapel</div> <div>12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall</div>	<b>6</b> <div>8:00am Yoga/Hall</div> <div>5:30pm Yoga/Hall</div>	<b>7</b> <div>8:15am Mass</div> <div>9am Rector's Forum</div> <div>10:30am Staff Mtg</div> <div>1:10pm Gooden Chapel</div> <div>2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal</div>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> <div>11am- Funeral/Celebration of Life for Patrick Dougall *Reception to follow in Hawks Hall*</div>
<b>10</b> <div>8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div> <div>9am Between the Masses Discussion Group</div> <div>10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div>	<b>11</b> <div>8:00am Yoga/Hall</div> <div>Indigenous People's Day</div>	<b>12</b> <div>11am Gooden Chapel</div> <div>1:15pm Gooden Chapel</div> <div>12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall</div>	<b>13</b> <div>8:00am Yoga/Hall</div> <div>5:30pm Yoga/Hall</div>	<b>14</b> <div>8:15am Mass</div> <div>9am Rector's Forum</div> <div>1:10pm Gooden Chapel</div> <div>2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal</div>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> <div>8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div> <div>9am Between the Masses Discussion Group</div> <div>10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div> <div>Pastor Josh Out of Town</div>	<b>18</b> <div>8:00am Yoga/Hall</div> <div>1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall</div>	<b>19</b> <div>11am Gooden Chapel</div> <div>1:15pm Gooden Chapel</div> <div>12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall</div> <div>7:30pm Vestry Meeting Hall</div>	<b>20</b> <div>8:00am Yoga/Hall</div> <div>5:30pm Yoga/Hall</div>	<b>21</b> <div>8:15am Mass</div> <div>9am Rector's Forum</div> <div>10:30am Staff Meeting</div> <div>1:10pm Gooden Chapel</div> <div>2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal</div>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> <div>8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div> <div>9am Between the Masses Discussion Group</div> <div>10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div>	<b>25</b> <div>8:00am Yoga/Hall</div> <div>1pm Gooden Drama Class/Hall</div>	<b>26</b> <div>11am Gooden Chapel</div> <div>1:15pm Gooden Chapel</div> <div>12:30-3pm Gooden Drama Classes/Hall</div>	<b>27</b> <div>8:00am Yoga/Hall</div> <div>5:30pm Yoga/Hall</div>	<b>28</b> <div>8:15am Mass</div> <div>9am Rector's Forum</div> <div>1:10pm Gooden Chapel</div> <div>2pm-5pm Organist Rehearsal</div>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> <div>8am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div> <div>9am Between the Masses Discussion Group</div> <div>10:15am Indoor Worship w/Eucharist *Facebook Live*</div>						