



The SPIRE

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

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Upcoming Events

Feb 29th Lenten Series Begins

March 1st—4th
Cursillo Weekend for Men

Mar 3rd Leadership Retreat

Mar 4th Interment of Ann Poland

Mar 9th—12th
Cursillo Weekend for Women

Mar 11th
Formation Meeting
Daylight Savings Time begins

Mar 20th Vestry Meeting

Mar 22 Daughters of the King Meeting

Mar 25th Parish Ministry Council Meeting

Mar 28th Last Wednesday of Lenten Series

MARCH 2012

From the Rector

Recently, my spouse Debbie was in New York City for a conference at The Teacher's College of Columbia University. On her last night, she stayed at a place called the House of the Redeemer. It is a large New York style mansion near Central Park that many years ago was given to the Episcopal Church and now operates as a guest house. In the elevator going to breakfast, she encountered a couple and they began to chat. It turns out that the gentleman, Con Quimby, is a priest who served in Los Angeles many years ago and who has been a long-time friend of Father Wood. (It is a small world in the Episcopal Church!) But a further connection is that in the early 1970's, Con Quimby was one of the founding members of the small support group for priests to which I have belonged for 26 years. Con reminded Debbie that forty some years ago, he and a group of clergy attended a conference on leading a healthy spiritual life, and a few of them came away realizing they couldn't make the journey alone. And so the group was born.

While none of the founding members are still part of the group, succeeding clergy have continued to spend an entire day together once a month ever since. There are nine of us now (all priests), and we meet the first Monday of every month. We share our lives, our challenges, and our joys. We eat lunch and tell jokes and stories. And at the end of our time each month, we pray together.

The point I want to make by telling you about my clergy support group is this: none of us -- whether lay or ordained -- can make the spiritual journey by ourselves. As you make this Lenten journey once again, I pray that you will pause along the way, attend to the needs of those about you who may need your support and friendship, and give thanks for the companions walking with you. May you strengthen them, and they strengthen you.

Blessings, MAB+



Holy Week Services

April 1, Palm Sunday Services
8:00am & 10:15am

April 2, 7:00pm Mass

April 3, 7:00pm Mass

April 4, Tenebrae 7:00pm

April 5, Maundy Thursday

- 7:00pm Foot Washing and Mass

- The Watch at the Altar of Repose begins after the 7:00pm mass on Maundy Thursday and continues until midnight

April 6, Good Friday

- Stations of the Cross at noon
- Good Friday Liturgy and Veneration of the Cross 7:00pm

Don't Forget.....



Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 11th @ 2:00am. Move your clocks ahead 1 hour before going to bed!

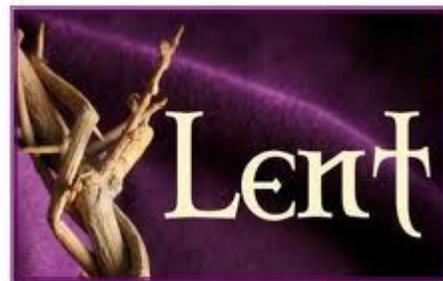
From Our Ministry Intern, *Marianne Zahn*

2012 Lenten Series

During my time at Ascension, I've noticed a growing utilization of electronic resources and a greater internet presence. For some of us, there is some discomfort with, and perhaps even resistance to, the use of these modern technologies. But this discomfort is actually a good thing because wherever there is tension, I think it often means God is starting something new.

Lent is a perfect time to shake up our assumptions and to see things in new ways. For our upcoming Lenten series, I'd like to step into that tension and explore with you what God might be saying - not only through new media, but also in the culture at large. How might God be speaking to us in our ministries and relationships at Ascension?

Even when we disagree with an author's opinions, we know we can still learn from books and other print media that present ideas that provoke us. In the same way, we can also learn to "read" our culture for deeper meaning even if we don't personally find entertainment value in the songs of Katy Perry or the vampire antics of TV's *True Blood*. Each week of the series, we will use clips and materials from one-of-five different areas of culture: music, film, TV, web media, and food as prompts for discussion.. Then in small groups, we will reflect on ways that Scripture and church tradition might interact with these "cultural artifacts." Finally, together we will attempt to discern what the interaction between our religious heritage and theology and today's culture might be calling us towards as individuals and/or as a church.



If it sounds like a tall order, it is! But I hope that you will join me and help spark what should at least be some interesting conversations. **The Lenten Series begins Wednesday, February 29th and continues through March 28th. Please see the calendar for location and times.**

From Our Minister to Young Persons, *Jobi Harrell*

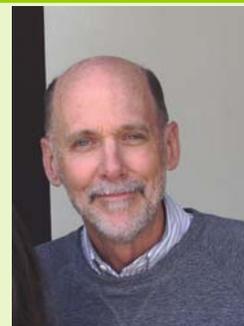
How to Lent

Lent has traditionally been observed by prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. For some, Lent is a time of cleansing of the body and mind, a time to "go without" unhealthy and frivolous elements within our daily diets. Some fast by giving up meat, alcohol, sweets, or other specific types of food. Others do not place as great an emphasis on fasting but instead focus on charitable deeds, helping those in need with food and clothing or by giving money to charities. Still others regard the Lenten journey as a time of prayer and penance, seeking repentance as a way to focus on our need for God's grace.

I have one friend who absolutely loves the beginning of Lent. It is her once a year forty day diet which culminates with her going to McDonald's at Easter for a long-awaited Big Mac. I have another friend who has coined her life 'a permanent Lent.' Each year she begrudgingly adds a personal service project to her already full life and somehow makes that project happen. Each year, I make a spiritual practice of listening to both of my friends whine throughout the entire Liturgical Season: one friend is hungry and craving carbs for 40 days, while the other is so busy that there's not much time to spend together. My own Lenten discipline changes from year to year. In previous years I have 'given up,' and other years I have 'taken on.' My choice always seems to address an area in my life that has become imbalanced. Regardless of what I decide to do, each year I re-learn that I have much to learn from my Lenten discipline. My commitment to the discipline can become a permanent paradigm shift (like the year I gave up social media as I was spending way too much time online) or an experience that is never again to be pursued (like the year I gave up all forms of flour).

Ultimately, Lent is a time for each of us to deepen our relationship with Jesus in His ministry. Whatever attitude one adopts, Lent allows us to explore our unique self within our spiritual community. We can all then share together as the journey leads to the joy of the empty tomb. Through our various Lenten disciplines, we prepare to celebrate God's marvelous redemption at Easter and the resurrected life that we live and hope for as Christians.

Senior Warden Column



Gene Bartow died last month at the age of 81. The retired athletic director and head basketball coach at the University of Alabama Birmingham was inducted into the National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame in 2009 with a career won-loss record of 647-353. But most Californians of a certain age remember him best as the coach who followed John Wooden at UCLA.

In his two years in Westwood, Bartow's Bruins went 28-4 and 24-5, won two conference championships, and went to the NCAA Final Four. That's a pretty impressive record...anywhere except UCLA. Thus, his tenure was brief.

Mr. Bartow has been on my mind of late, as it is my fate to follow Coach Gary Griffiths. During Gary's year as Senior Warden, Hawks Hall was remodeled (thank you, Mary Tumilty), restrooms were added, a new minister to young people was hired (welcome, Jobi), our ties to Gooden School were strengthened, a new administrator joined the staff (welcome, Kim), Father Bamberger's 25th Anniversary was celebrated, and the north athletic field was resurfaced (thank you, Gooden Head of School Patty Patano). And during this unprecedented flurry of activity (no less an authority that Jean Rowe described 2011 as "... quietly the most ambitious year we have ever had..."), our projected budget deficit of about \$18,000 was transformed into a nearly equivalent surplus. And who do you suppose chaired the Stewardship Committee during this remarkable reversal? No surprise there: Senior Warden Gary Griffiths.

Clearly, a coaching career is great preparation for the job of Senior Warden. Given the image that some famous coaches project, you might imagine Gary running up and down the parish sidelines, screaming at the Vestry, arguing with the Rector, browbeating the Altar Guild, and throwing chairs at the Bishop.

Not even close.

Gary gently guided Ascension through this remarkable year without ever raising his voice. Indeed, for many of us over the age of 50, he's barely audible. He works calmly, quietly, and steadily: planning, encouraging, exhorting, following through, and graciously saying thank you. His vision of what Church of the Ascension can be is compelling, and his focus on the future of the Church and its young people is inspiring. The longer you listen to him, and the more time you work with him, the more impressive this quiet man becomes. Again quoting Jean Rowe's summary of 2011: "Amazing things that have been on lists for years have gotten done – and we are grateful and blessed."

I now have an inkling of how Coach Bartow felt at UCLA. Although I am technically the answer to the question, "Who followed Gary Griffiths?" the correct answer is: we all did. Thanks be to God, and to Gary, for a truly extraordinary year.

submitted by Jay Packer

Another Successful Shrove Tuesday!

With the help of the following people, we had another successful Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper:

Lisa Reed, Christopher Reed, Alexander Reed, Jackie O'Sullivan, Kasey O'Sullivan, Fr. Michael, Jill Wagner, Mike Ruble, Mikey, Richard and Kathy Calleton.

We served between 40 and 45 people and were able to raise \$188 for ECPAC

A BIG thanks to all of you!

Lisa Reed, Fellowship Ministry Leader



EASTER

MUSIC & FLOWER DONATIONS



Easter is on April 8th this year. Please consider making a contribution to our music fund for the special music we enjoy and to the St. Anne's Altar Guild to beautify our Sanctuary with Easter flowers. Envelopes for each fund will soon be available at the back of the church. If you are contributing money for the flowers, please make checks payable to St. Anne's Altar Guild. Thank you.

News from our Outreach Ministry Leader, Anna Thomas

Bad Weather Shelter Dinner

Ascension hosted a dinner at the Bad Weather Shelter in Pasadena on February 11th. Thanks to everyone who volunteered, and we had a great many volunteers! Some members of our Youth Group pitched in for a second time this year. Over 170 people came for dinner. Many returned for seconds and thirds, and we still left some food behind for the next morning.



Nets for Life

Don't forget to contribute to our Lenten project--Nets for Life. Each net costs \$12 (*this includes training for the family on how to use the net*). Each net on average saves 3 people from malaria and other mosquito-borne illnesses.

Diane Rhodus is collecting the money for the nets. Please contact her or drop off a check at the office made out to Church of the Ascension--write Nets for Life in the memo section.

You can also read more about this project on the ER&D website at <http://www.er-d.org>.

ECPAC Women's Room Lunch

The Women's Room at ECPAC (Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Area Congregations) hosts lunch for between 20 to 25 women every day. Most days of the month have been assigned to a church or other charity group, but the Women's Room organizers don't have any groups to provide lunch for the 1st Monday or the 4th Thursday of each month. Parishioner Sandra Dickey has been preparing lunch for the Women's Room for a while on her own. She has suggested that we ask if there are any other people in the congregation willing to volunteer. This Outreach Ministry would mean a commitment to either the 1st Monday or the 4th Thursday (or both days) for at least three to six months. Volunteers could provide lunches as a group or have one or two people take on one month at a time—it all depends on the number of volunteers who respond. Lunch includes soup and sandwiches, salad or a veggie plate, and dessert and/or usually fruit as well. If you're interested in being a part of this group, please contact Sandra for more details. Her email address is lilredshack@aol.com.

March Cursillo Weekends

The "Cursillo" (a short course in Christian living) is an international movement under the authority of the Bishop of each diocese for strengthening adult leadership in the church and other environments. The Cursillo method includes a three day weekend in which a team of laity and priests present the fundamental principles of Christian living (piety, study, action); ongoing small groups meet during which members make themselves mutually accountable for living these principles; larger meetings (Ultreyas) share an on-going exploration of ways in which to bring the GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST to all environments through planned action both as individuals and in groups. Upcoming retreats will be held in Pomona for Men, March 1—4 and Women, March 9—12. Additional information and candidate applications are available on the Hawks Hall bulletin board. For more information, contact Keiko Sakatani, John and Barbara Larson, Adela Gomez, or Joy Barry.

Worldwide, 925 million people are hungry. Every day, as many as 11,000 children under age 5 die due to hunger-related causes. That's one kid every 8 seconds. The 30 Hour Famine Project gives our senior youth group a chance to do something about this situation—to rise up and



serve the hungry. Every year, hundreds of thousands of students throughout the United States join the Famine. They go without food for 30 hours. They learn what it feels like to overcome the pangs of hunger. And they raise funds to help feed hungry children and families around the world. Our young people refuse to be told that kids can't make a difference. Every \$30 raised by our senior youth group can help feed and care for a child for a month. We hope to make a real difference, so be on the lookout for ways to help our 2012 30 Hour Famine be a huge success!

More information to come.

mark your calendars...APRIL 27-28

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP POTLUCK LUNCHEON

Ladies of Ascension, please join us for the Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon on **Saturday, April 28, 2012** at 11:30 am in Hawks Hall at 25 East Laurel Avenue, Sierra Madre, California. It is a great way to visit with friends, enjoy a yummy lunch and make new friends. All friends are welcome!

Respectfully,

Lisa Reed

Fellowship Ministry Leader



EASTER POTLUCK BRUNCHES APRIL 8, 2012

Hippity Hop - the Easter Bunny has good news! We will be having two Easter Potluck Brunches this year following each Service. The first brunch will begin about 8:00 am after The Great Vigil and Solemn Mass and the second will be following the 10:15 Festival High Mass.

Sign-up sheets will be posted in Hawks Hall by the middle of March 2012. Please note: there will be two sign-up sheets, one for each brunch.

If you would like to volunteer to help set-up the Hall on Saturday, April 7th and/or help with the first brunch on Sunday morning, please contact Lisa Reed, Fellowship Ministry Leader, at 626-357-3908 or lisareed4@verizon.net.



Come Join Ascension for some Easter Fun!

Junior & Senior Youth Egg Decorating Party

Join us on Holy Saturday (April 7th from 12:00 PM – 2:30 PM) in Hawks Hall for lunch and some very egg-citing fellowship. We will stuff plastic eggs and dye hard boiled eggs for the 2012 Easter Egg Hunt! Help us make this Easter the most egg-cellent yet! Please bring one dozen hard-boiled eggs, and we'll provide the rest of the items for the festivities! Contact Scott or Jobi with any questions.

Attention all children... Easter Egg Hunt on Sunday, April 8th, following the Easter Sunrise Service.

BRING YOUR OWN EASTER BASKET!



Notes From the Loft

This column recently discussed the problem of "cyphers" in pipe organs - specifically in the Ascension Harris organ. At the beginning of February, we experienced another cypher - on a light flute at the B-pitch. On the 12th this particular cypher had simply disappeared, so I thought we were "home free." In preparation for the 10:15 opening voluntary, I sat down at the console and pushed one of the pistons (which opens the air to a designated set of pipes). Spontaneously, and without my touching a single key, the organ began to sound at a G-pitch. Each successive piston I pushed more notes sounded; nothing I did would stop it. There was no choice, then, but to turn off the organ, relocate the choir to the chapel and play the service with the piano. Thanks to the quick versatility of the choir, the relocation took place and the service continued - with the choristers sounding as wonderful as ever! Now then, this was an organ situation which I'd never before experienced - the organ technician initially was baffled as well. It turns out that our "uber-cypher," as I dubbed it, was the result of a pinched contact on the upper G in the pedals. Once this was repaired, the problem was resolved. Praise be to God (and to the organ technician)!

Our Lenten music continues during March:

March 4 - "Teach Me, My God and King" by Craig Phillips - he's from All Saints Beverly Hills - you've read about him in previous Spires; "We Adore Thee, Christ Our Lord" by Mozart, arranged by Thomas Hoekstra, a college colleague of mine.

March 11 - the powerful "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" by Gilbert Martin. If this doesn't send shivers down your spine, nothing will! This will be coupled with "My Jesus, I Love Thee" - a lush arrangement of the hymn by southern California composer Paul Sjolund.

March 18 - James Hopkins' "Who Is This That Comes From Far"; Dr. Hopkins is no stranger to Ascension - the works of the USC Thornton School professor emeritus frequently have been heard in our sanctuary. We will be singing an alternative text to the original poetry written by our very own Lavette Teague. During communion Colette Ostrye and Keiko Sakatani will sing "Give Ear Oh Lord" by baroque composer Heinrich Schutz.

March 25 - the exquisite, beloved "Cantique de Jean Racine" by Gabriel Faure with cello obligato played by Lucas Marquardt. Walter Pelz' "Show Me Thy Ways" will be featured during communion.

With great pleasure I have the honor of presenting to our Ascension family LA Opera Thornton/Domingo Young Artist Ben Bliss, tenor, who will be singing with the choir from March 11 through Easter. Ben will be joining us on the 11th and will remain through Easter. As confirmed by his February 25 Ambassador Auditorium appearance with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in Bach's "Magnificat," Ben will make an incredible musical contribution to our worship.

Finally, a request of you: during Lent, please refrain from applause at the end of the closing voluntary. Be assured that your expression of appreciation throughout the year is extremely meaningful to me, but let me encourage you to silently absorb the music and, during this period of retrospection, exit the sanctuary in contemplation. Thanks.

Continued Lenten blessings,

Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

HOSPITALITY... Do you enjoy planning parties, cooking, organizing special and fun events? Why not become a member of the Hospitality Committee? The Hospitality Committee organizes the Church's social events: Easter Brunch, Evensong Receptions, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, Sponsored Coffee Hours, and much more.

The Hospitality Committee could use your help. If interested, please contact Lisa Reed @ 357-3908 or email her at lisareed4@verizon.net. You can also contact Richele Duffy @ 536-7392 or richeleduffy@earthlink.net.



ADMINISTRATIVE/CLERICAL...

A volunteer is needed to answer phones during our staff meetings on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month for about 2 hours starting at 10:30am.

Volunteer(s) are needed to help fold bulletins and perform miscellaneous administrative tasks on Friday afternoons.

If interested, please contact the Parish Office at 626-355-1133 or email us at parish@ascension-sierramadre.com.

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/April 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 8a.m. Mass 9a.m.Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass Noon PMC Meeting	27	28 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	29 6p.m. Mass 6:30 Meatless Potluck 7pm Lenten Series Begins 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	1 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting	2 5pm-7pm Cooking class	3 8:30am-1:30pm Leadership Retreat
4 8a.m. Mass 9a.m.Ed. Hour & Choir 9a.m. Interment for Ann Poland 10:15a.m. Mass	5	6 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	7 6p.m. Mass 6:30 Meatless Potluck 7pm Lenten Series Continues 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	8 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum	9	10 8:30am Stillpoint 4pm-6pm Cooking Class
11 Daylight Savings Time 8a.m. Mass 9a.m.Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass Noon Formation Meeting	12	13 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	14 6p.m. Mass 6:30 Meatless Potluck 7pm Lenten Series Continues 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	15 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting	16	 HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY
18 8a.m. Mass 9a.m.Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass	19	20 SPIRE ARTICLES DUE 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group 7:30p.m. Vestry Meeting	21 6p.m. Mass 6:30 Meatless Potluck 7pm Lenten Series Continues 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	22 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 4pm-8pm Daughters of the King Meeting	23	24 Diocese Ministry Fair http://www.ladocese.org/digital_fair/events/3150436
25 8a.m. Mass 9a.m.Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass Noon PMC Meeting	26	27 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group	28 SPIRE DISTRIBUTED 6p.m. Mass 6:30 Meatless Potluck 7pm LENTEN SERIES ENDS 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	29 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum	30	31
1 PALM SUNDAY 8a.m. Mass 9a.m.Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15a.m. Mass	2 7p.m. Mass	3 11a.m. Prayer in the Chapel 6p.m. Dinner Group 7p.m. Mass	4 5:45p.m. Yoga Tenebrae 7p.m. 7:30p.m. Choir Rehearsal	5 7a.m. Mass 9a.m. Forum 10:30a.m. Staff Meeting 7p.m. Maundy Thursday Service	6 Good Friday Services Noon & 7p.m.	7 9a.m.-Noon Parish Work Party



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