



The SPIRE

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



JULY 2012

*Then we were in shock...
Now we celebrate...*

*Join us as we remember the 1991
Sierra Madre Earthquake.*

Mass on the Grass

Sunday, July 1st

**Outdoor
Worship Service
10:15 a.m.**

After the service, all are
invited to the upper field for the

**Annual Parish
Picnic & Water
Games**



- Hotdogs and hamburgers provided.
- Please bring a side dish, a salad, or a dessert to share.
- Please bring your own beverages!

FROM THE RECTOR

As I write this, I am hours away from leaving on pilgrimage. Besides the business of collecting everything to take and starting to pack, there is a growing sense of anticipation of the emotional spiritual importance of this journey. I realize that I will be observing the anniversary of my ordination to the diaconate at the place where the first deacons were called and where the deacon Stephen became the first martyr. I will be praying in locations where miraculous cures happened.

People have encouraged me to go and leave the concerns for Ascension at home, and in one sense I will. But I also will be carrying my prayer list with me. I won't be wondering about how things are going at home, but I will be carrying prayer intentions with me. I expect to encounter Jesus in a new way on this journey. As I do, I'll be bringing the hopes and concerns of my life to him.

Blessings
MAB+



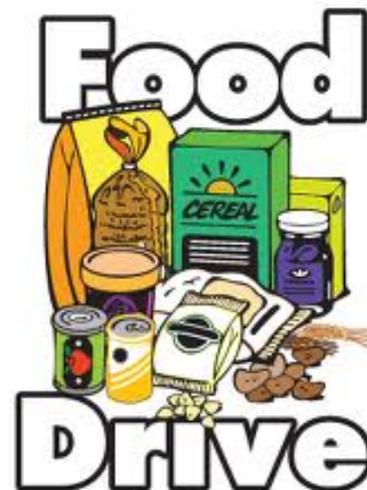
Setting Aside A Portion For Others...

Sunday July 1st, Food Ingathering at Ascension

In a recent letter we received from Patricia O'Reilly, Executive Director of ECPAC (Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Area Congregations) Pat wrote: "We continue to serve the community in vital ways during this economically challenged time. We served 2538 people in our food pantry last month. This is the highest number we have ever served in one month! The last time our numbers reached 2500 people, we were forced to establish a geographical requirement, as people were beginning to come to our pantry from all over, and we did not have the resources to serve them all. Now we just have to provide.

How can Ascension respond to this need? We can help if whenever we go to the grocery store we pick up items for the Friends In Deed Food Pantry, the food distribution branch of the Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Area Congregations, and bring these items to church on Ingathering Sunday (**the 1st Sunday of every month**). If each family at Ascension would bring one item, WE can make a significant difference in the lives of others.

**Items such as peanut butter,
canned meats, and fish are most**

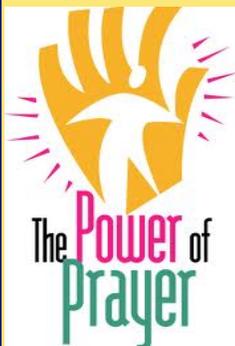


Answered Prayers

I have trouble at times decoding voicemail messages. Sometimes the speaker on the other end is difficult to understand, and sometimes there is just so much extra sound that I am unable to understand the full message. Modern technology has come to the rescue, and I have a program that instantly puts voice messages into text. Yes! You heard me!!! I read all of my phone messages.

Last July, I got the funniest message I have ever received. As a matter of fact, it was an answer to a prayer - a prayer that I had all but given up hope of having answered. At the time of the phone call, I had been searching for a change in employment. I knew I ought to be grateful for the work I did have and felt that if there was no change on the horizon, I must be supposed to stay. I decided that I should switch my prayer to: *Lord, help me accept what I cannot change.* Right upon my seeking to accept and understand my current situation, I got a message that read: *Hi Joanna. This is Michael Hamburger calling, and I'd like to talk to you about our job position here at the Church of the Attention. Talk to you soon.* Although the phone did a poor job of catching some nuances of speech, this message led to my change in employment. I finally received a long awaited answer to my prayer.

As Christians, we pray. There are many examples of prayers contributing to what otherwise would be inexplicable. Medical professionals have recounted terminal cases that shifted to the patient being completely healed, a phenomenon for which they have no known explanation. Parents have been blessed with a child they were told would never be possible for them. Jobs are obtained, forgiveness is achieved, and love is found.



Whether or not we search for a scientific reason or simply have faith in the power of prayer; let us each remember to pray. I know it seems like an obvious thing to state; however, every time I hear any slogan for anything obvious (like drink 8 glasses of water each day), I find myself lacking in meeting the criteria. So, state the obvious I will!

Prayer works.

We should pray.

7 days without prayer makes one weak.

☺ *Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons*



Three Ways to Ask for Prayers

Fill out a prayer request form on the last Sunday of the month and return it to the office by the following Tuesday.

Add a name to the weekly Prayers of the People which can be found in a folder at the back of the Church prior to services on Sunday morning.

Ask one of the clergy to pray for you or call the parish office and ask that your prayer request be added to the Prayers of the People.

Always be aware that all of our clergy are available to you if you would like to talk about any facet of your prayer life.

What Do We Mean By The Fellowship of Prayer?

Last week at Parish Ministry Council, we talked about the possibility that not everyone at Ascension knows what the Fellowship of Prayer is or how to be a part of it.

There are two ways to participate in the Fellowship of Prayer. One way is to fill out a Fellowship of Prayer request list which can be found at the back of the church. On the sheet there are places for specific requests such as illness, an upcoming surgery, travel, thanksgiving for the birth of a child, prayers for inner peace plus additional spaces to request prayer for anything not listed. You can make one request or several. You can list one name or many. Usually only first names are used. Prayer request sheets can be turned in any time, but most frequently people turn in the prayer request sheet the last Sunday of the month by putting the sheet in the offering plate or dropping it by the church office.

The second way to participate in the Fellowship of Prayer is to take a copy of the month's prayer list which is available the first Sunday of the month at the back of the church. People who take the prayer list do so intending that the requests listed will become a part of their own daily prayers for that month. Those who have made the requests have the comfort of knowing that a number of people are praying for their specific joy, concern, or sorrow.

You don't have to limit yourself to requesting or praying about requests. You can do both. Fellowship of Prayer lists for July are available. If you can't locate the list, ask one of the ushers.





DISCERNMENT

Senior Warden's Column

7:43 a.m., June 28, 1991: *terra firma* in Sierra Madre is suddenly not so *firma* anymore. In a few seconds, our own Sierra Madre fault does more structural damage to Church of the Ascension than a battalion of toddlers could do in a month, rendering the sanctuary uninhabitable. On July 1st, we will commemorate the anniversary of that temblor and the subsequent rebuilding of the church by celebrating the 20th annual *Mass on the Grass*, our corporate affirmation that, plate tectonics notwithstanding, the Eucharist must go on.

Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, famously observed, "Happy the people whose annals are boring to read." With periodic windstorms, brush fires, mudslides, earthquakes, and real estate bubbles, the annals of life in the southern California foothills are dramatically episodic, not unlike the practice of anesthesiology: long periods of relative tranquility interspersed with unexpected bursts of abject terror. The remembrance of our natural (and synthetic) disasters and our response to them offers insight into who we are, both as individuals and as a parish. And not just our disasters, but also our blessings: the miracle of Christopher Reed, the febrile but safe arrival of Philip Thomas. Like ancient Israel, the narratives of the many dangers, toils, and snares through which we have already come help refine our understanding of amazing grace and reinforce our faith.

Discernment, as Episcopalians use the word, refers to the sometimes mysterious, liminal process by which we try to divine what in God's name we're supposed to do with the lives and resources we've been given. We tend to think of discernment as a task for young people, students, ministry interns. In point of fact, discernment is not the exclusive province of youth; with the passage of time, questions persist and the mystery deepens. As Malcom L. Warford writes in *The Alban Weekly*,

This question of what God calls us to be and to do is not a question that once posed and answered can be put away, never to be raised again. Instead, it is a persisting issue for those whose everyday lives raise the question in various guises.

In considering what God is calling us to do next, individuals and parishes of a certain age must also ask, "Who is this person I have turned out to be?" Because, as Richard Bolles tells us in *How to Find Your Mission in Life*,

The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deepest hunger meet.

Over the next few months, Keiko Sakatani and Tom Duffy, our Parish Visionaries (*a.k.a.* the Strategic Planning Committee), will guide us on a journey of corporate discernment, presenting us with a series of questions designed to engage our memories, imaginations, and hearts. As the Spirit moves you, help them clarify who we have become and where we might be going.

Jay Packer



ECPAC/Friends in Deed—Back to School Drive

With your help, ECPAC/Friends in Deed would like to provide school supplies for children in need. The following items are needed:

- Small and Medium sized backpacks (*ages 8 to 16*)
- Binders, Spiral Notebooks, Packs of Pencils, Markers, Scissors, Pens (some red), Loose Leaf Paper (regular & college ruled), Colored Pencils, Erasers, Sharpeners, Rulers, and Glue Sticks. ****Crayons are NOT needed this year****

Items should be brought to ECPAC (M-F 9-5 pm) or dropped off at the Church by Sunday, July 22nd.

ECPAC/444 East Washington Blvd./ Pasadena, CA/For Info, call 626-797-6072



The Deacon's Den

"You can't go back home to your family, back home to your childhood ... back home to a young man's dreams of glory and of fame ... back home to places in the country, back home to the old forms and systems of things which once seemed everlasting but which are changing all the time – back home to the escapes of Time and Memory." ~Thomas Wolfe

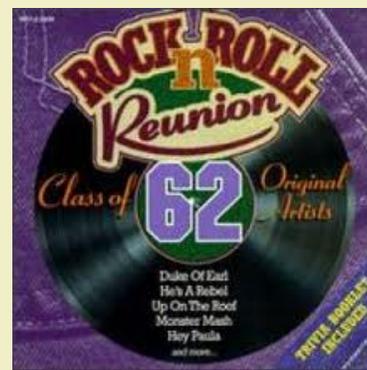
On June 13th, my colleague and I watched the 8th grade class at the Gooden School graduate. I sat there thinking that when my 8th grade class graduated 50 years ago, that we too knew exactly who we were and where we were going. The same seems true today for these young men and woman. They possess an innocent optimism that keeps them grounded in the present and hopeful for the future.

The closing line of the movie *Stand by Me*: "it seems to me that I never had any friends like the ones I had at twelve" reminds me of truths long forgotten and awakens memories of simpler more innocent times that in fact allowed me to know exactly who I was and exactly where I was going. I often tell young people anxious to grow up that "it's not all it's cracked up to be." We become so absorbed in being "what" we are that "who" we are becomes a distant memory or at best a distant longing for wholeness.

It seems to me that Thomas Wolfe wasn't lucky enough to attend his 50th graduation from grammar school. On June 23rd I'll be doing just that. The anticipation is building and I've already been chatting it up with a few of the other twelve year olds in my class. You see, Mr. Wolfe, about 40 sixty-three year olds are going home to be twelve again. We're journeying home to remind ourselves of who we are and to share in the blessing of being twelve and sixty-three at the same time. Home, Mr. Wolfe, is where you go to see where the dream began and continues to unfold today. It's about "context," Mr. Wolfe. Sometimes you just need to go home, hang out with your best friends ever, and allow yourself to be twelve again.

Mr. Wolfe, we're saving a place at the table for you. Please join us.

Ed+



NOTES FROM THE LOFT by Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist 🎵

On my "to-do" list for the summer month is planning for the fall semester (*pardon my academic mind-set versus liturgical-year-speak, which will come later*). Although this task primarily includes choral anthem-planning, it's also a time to investigate new organ literature. I attempt to include some old, familiar selections with a sprinkling of new literature. And, of course, hymn selection is part of this process as well.

Usually, I wouldn't be asking for your assistance in this endeavor; but it would be of interest to me to learn what YOUR favorite hymns are. Of course, I receive feedback from congregational members - I LOVED this hymn, why did we sing THAT hymn?, could we PLEASE sing something else?, etc. (along with the organ was too loud, I couldn't hear the organ, you played that hymn awfully fast, or your tempo was as slow as a dirge!). Long ago I determined that I'd never be able to please all of the people all of the time, but I hope that I do please most of you most of the time! But I digress. In any case, I'd love to know what you consider to be your three favorite hymns. There are only two rules in this exercise: 1) the hymns must be included in the 1982 hymnal; and 2) they must be exclusive of Christmas carols. So, please send me an email message (Drdhuffman@msn.com) or drop a note in my Ascension mailbox. Your comments may be signed or anonymous - as long as "anonymous" doesn't vote more than once! In a future column, I'll let you know the results of this survey - it will be interesting to see if there's consensus among us.

Thanks for your feedback - I look forward to hearing from you. In the meantime, wherever summer takes you, have a wonderful time of rest and relaxation.

*God in my soul, God in my heart,
God in mine eternity.*

OUTREACH – Ways We Can Make a Difference

How often have we seen a homeless person and wanted to do something! But how should we help? All the charitable agencies tell us that we should not give homeless people money because what we want the money to do is not always how the money is spent. The Ecumenical Council of Pasadena Congregations (ECPAC) and its programs can help us assist the homeless in the right way.



Here at Ascension we've supported the Bad Weather Shelter. But the Shelter is not the only ECPAC program we can help. Friends Indeed House is a food distribution center where the homeless and the poor can come for food on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Much of this food comes from the Los Angeles Food Bank which services many food distribution locations in Los Angeles County. Perhaps you've read about the decrease in the amount of food available for distribution at places like Friends Indeed House. More and more often, this facility is having to rely on private sources, people like us, to make up the difference. Friends Indeed House currently services 2500 people a month. Their doors open at 10:00, but people start lining up as early as 8:30.

Four days a week, Friends Indeed House sponsors The Women's Room, a place, where homeless women find refuge from the streets, shower, wash clothes, nap, and socialize in a safe environment. Once a month, a member of St. Mark's in Altadena gives haircuts. Members of the staff let these women know what resources are available to help them improve their current situations. One woman who comes to the Women's Room said, "It's nice to come here because they're dealing with us as women – not homeless women, but people who have a need." Future plans for the Women's Room include installing a shower and getting a washer/dryer. The Women's Room Coordinator is looking for volunteers who will provide a hot meal – something simple such as soup. Maybe we could help here.

WANT TO HELP?

- Donate non-perishable goods to Friends Indeed's food distribution program: ***Peanut butter, canned meats, cereals and protein based foods are always needed. For the homeless, pull top cans work best.***
- Donate fruit and vegetables from your trees/gardens – Have too many oranges, tangerines, avocados? Plant too much zucchini? There is always a need.
- Provide a backpack or other school supplies for low income children.
- Make a financial contribution to ECPAC
- Designate ECPAC for your United Way Contribution
- Ask your employer to match your gift if applicable
- Volunteer
 - At the food bank
 - At the Women's Room
 - At the Bad Weather Shelter



Nets for Life: One of the Ways We At Ascension Are Helping To Save Lives.

The Nets for Life Program is a diocese wide program dedicated to helping eradicate cholera. Ascension began its participation in the Nets program last December. When asked how many nets we would purchase, Diane Rhodus, our Nets Coordinator, initially threw out the number of 366 nets or a net a day for each day of the year (it was a Leap Year). In order to meet this goal, we needed to raise \$4,392.

Since the goal was a real stretch for a parish of our size, we failed to meet Diane's optimistic goal. But we did succeed in raising \$2,825 for 235 and 5/12 nets which represents 705 lives saved. This amount is a very lofty total for a parish our size. So, Good Job, Ascension.

Diane Rhodus, Jackie O'Sullivan & Kasey

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP LUNCHEON

At our last Women's Fellowship Luncheon, Karen Moordian showed all of us how to make her Boureg. Some of us watched from the slide lines, while others brought the ingredients and worked along side of Karen. It was a fun way to spend the afternoon learning something new while spending time with friends. Following the cooking lesson, we all enjoyed the potluck luncheon.

If there is something that you would like to bring to a Women's Fellowship Luncheon, a specialty that you may want to share, or know of a specialty from someone else that you would like to learn, contact Lisa Reed, and we will set it up.

Karen's Boureg

1 1lb box of Fillo Pastry Sheets (Karen uses Apollo)
 8 eggs
 1 1lb grated jack cheese
 ½ cup milk
 ½ lb of butter (salted or not)



1. Melt butter in microwave
2. Beat eggs with beaters, add milk and beat again
3. In a 9 x 13 pan, brush melted butter on bottom and sides of pan
4. Place 4 layers of the Fillo Sheets on the bottom of the pan, brush with butter, add 2 more Fillo sheets, brush with more butter, continue with 2 Fillo sheets, brush each set with butter. You will use about ½ pound of the Fillo sheets. When you have 4 Fillo Sheets remaining from the first ½ pound of Fillo, place those 4 sheets on top of the last layer of two and brush with butter.
5. Sprinkle the grated jack cheese evenly over the Fillo.
6. Pour the egg and milk mixture over the cheese, leaving yourself about ½ cup for the last layer.
7. With the remaining Fillo Sheets, start with four sheets, brush with butter, 2 more Fillo Sheets, brush with butter, continue with 2 Fillo Sheets, brush each set with butter. The last four Fillo Sheets will be your top and last layer, again brush with butter, pour the remaining ½ cup egg and milk over the top.
8. Important: Before baking, cut your Boureg into squares. Refrigerate overnight.
9. Bake at 375 or 400 degrees (depends on your oven) for about 40 minutes or until golden brown. Your Boureg will look as if it has been scored although you had cut it all the way through.

P.S. Don't worry if your Fillo sheets flake or crack; with all the butter, you won't be able to tell after it is baked.

The next Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon will be on Saturday, August 25, 2012 in Hawks Hall at 11:30 am. Please join us and bring a friend!

Lisa Reed
 Fellowship Ministry Leader

Bishop's Visitation

(AND CONFIRMATION OPPORTUNITY)

NOVEMBER 18, 2012



The Right Reverend
Diane M. Jardine Bruce

Bishop Suffragan of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles



CLASSES FORMING

NOW!

Youth Confirmation

Classes Begin September 23rd

(Candidates Must be in 7th Grade or older.)

Contact: Jobi Harell

Adult Confirmation

Reception & Reaffirmation

Contact: Deacon Ed

The Church of the Ascension 2012 Summer Schedule for all Children & Youth
Classes meet on Sundays from 9:00 am – 10:00 am in the Parish House.

JULY

- 1 Mass on the Grass**
Celebrate with us in our annual outdoor service and picnic!
- 8 Taking a Journey**
What items would you take on a long journey?
- 15 John the Baptist**
Join us as we hear about a rustic man and how to eat locust.
- 22 Service Project**
Students meet in Hawks Hall at 9 am to make a special gift.
- 29 Food For All**
Feeding ourselves & others. **Please bring a canned food item to donate to Friends in Deed.**

AUGUST

- 5 The Bread of Life**
Students will meet in the kitchen to learn how The Church of the Ascension prepares its very own communion bread!
- 12 The Eucharist**
Grace and mystery.
Students will explore the question: *What do you think about when you receive communion?*
- 19 Communion**
Please meet in the Sanctuary at 9 am to discuss the sacraments of the Eucharist.
- 26 All About Acolytes**
Students meet in the loft for acolyte robe re-fitting and general refresher on all things acolyte related.

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/August 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour & Choir 10:15AM MASS ON THE GRASS Annual Parish Picnic & Water Games Following the 10:15 Mass	2	3 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	4 5:45pm Yoga 6pm Mass HAPPY 4TH OF JULY! 	5 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	6	7
8 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Noon Formation Meeting	9	10 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	11 5:45pm Yoga 6pm Mass	12 7am Mass 9am Forum	13	14
15 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass	16	17 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group 7pm Vestry Mtg	18 5:45pm Yoga 6pm Mass	19 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	20	21 10am—4pm Campo-Ongo Reunion
22 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Noon PMC Meeting	23 SPIRE ARTICLES DUE	24 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	25 5:45pm Yoga 6pm Mass	26 7am Mass 9am Forum Noon Daughters of the King Lunch	27	28
29 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass	30	31 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	1 5:45pm Yoga 6pm Mass	2 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	3	4 Parish Work Party 

STAYING CONNECTED THROUGH THE WEEK



SEARCH FOR: Sierra Madre Episcopal Church of the Ascension
 Connect with fellow parishioners, get updated calendar information, Parish Photo Gallery



CHANNEL NAME: AscensionSierraMadre (1 word)
 Videos of Parish Events, Special Services, and more!