

The SPIRE

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



October 2012

Upcoming Events

October 6th -
Parish Work Party

October 7th -
Blessing of the Animals

October 14th -
The Rev'd Ron David Visits

October 21st -
Gooden School Sunday

October 27th -
Women's Fellowship Potluck
Luncheon

October 28th -
Crop Walk for Hunger

November 10th -
Holiday Shopping Party



From the Rector

What does the Ropes Course at Camp Stevens and the space shuttle Endeavor have in common? Both are outward and visible signs of the human spirit of inquiry and adventure. Each of us has a certain yearning to find out more about ourselves – our abilities and our limitations – and about the world we live in. At a basic level, we know we have to “get up higher” to gain a new perspective.



In order to climb on the Ropes Course, we have to rely on our support system to keep us safe, but we're the ones doing the climbing. Alex Reed learned about himself on the Ropes Course, but his adventure group learned as well. In a time of reflection, Alex shared the new perspective he gained from his experience. For twenty-five missions, astronauts relied on an extensive support system spread out across the country (and around the world) to carry out the missions. But the astronauts themselves had to put their lives on the line. Hundreds of experiments were carried out on the Endeavor, and it was from the Endeavor that astronauts were able to

repair the Hubble telescope, giving perspective to astronomers for generations to come.

The knowledge gained from shuttle flights and from climbing up the pole is both personal and for the larger community. And it is the indicator of God's grace given in Baptism. Remember the words prayed for each newly baptized person – “Give *them* an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and to love you, and the gift of joy and wonder in all your works. *Amen.*”



MAB+

It's October, and the annual Stewardship Campaign is upon us! Financial pledges by parishioners to Church of the Ascension comprise the basis for the church budget for the coming year. The budget is formulated in December and January by the staff and vestry based on the amount of money parishioners pledge during the Stewardship Campaign. When you receive your stewardship packet, please complete your pledge card and return it to the church office promptly. Keep in mind that if your economic situation changes (say, your long-lost uncle dies and leaves you all his Apple stock), you may contact the church office to revise your pledge at any time during the year. Letting the office know of any changes in your pledge helps ensure that the church's financial projections and budget remain accurate and up to date throughout the year.

Does your employer have a company match program for donations? Some companies do. A company match to your pledged amount is a great way to double your contribution to the Church. If you need assistance completing any company match paperwork, please contact the Church office.



– The Stewardship Committee



Join us for... a Blessing of the Animals



On Sunday, October 7th, 2012, Ascension will be holding its annual "Blessing of the Animals" ceremony at noon 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! Free pet sitting available during the 10:15 am Mass.



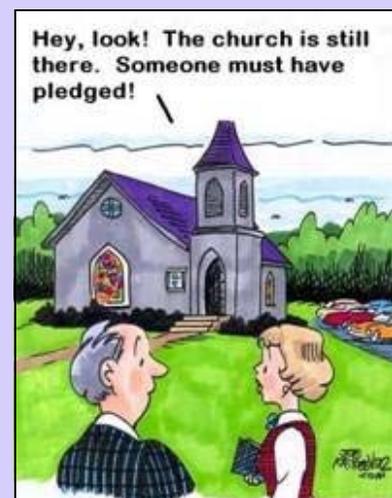
It's October, and I would be derelict in my Senior Warden duties if I didn't write something about the 2013 Stewardship Campaign at Church of the Ascension. Stewardship campaigns, and fund-raising in general, can be excruciating. Those of you who listen to KUSC or KPCC have learned to dread the biannual Pledge Drive, a week-long marathon of pleading, threatening, whining, and begging for funds necessary to operate a public radio station for another few months. During those interminable, soul-desiccating drives, some public radio stations offer "premiums" for membership contributions at different financial levels: coffee cups and tote bags for student level contributions, CD collections for middle class donations, and fully loaded iPods for captain-of-industry level gifts.

In the worthy pursuit of solvency, the sophisticated, knowledgeable musicologist/announcers of KUSC are compelled to repeatedly air popular pieces they detest during the pledge drive. Classical favorites such as Johann Pachelbel's *Canon in D* or Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* appeal to the great unwashed mass of potential donors but retain little charm for the on-air hosts after so many repeats. By the time the drive mercifully concludes with Jim Svejda playing Beethoven's 9th Symphony, it would be difficult to divine who has suffered more: the announcers or the audience.

Thankfully, the Stewardship Campaign at Church of the Ascension is far less invasive. It's a low key, tasteful, understated reminder that this is your church; and its continued missions of worship, presence, formation, outreach, fellowship, and pastoral care depend on your participation and financial support. The Vestry did briefly consider offering "premiums" for pledges to Church of the Ascension, but Father Michael reminded us that "premiums" had been a source of considerable discord in the Catholic Church, where they were referred to as "indulgences."

So, complete your Ascension pledge card with gratitude, generosity, and alacrity. It would be a shame if Dr. Huffman had to play Pachelbel's *Canon in D* as a postlude for the entire month of October...

Jay Packer, Sr. Warden



Ascension is blessed with an amazing group of dedicated teachers. But when the unpredictable events of life occur, the need for substitutes has become vital.

Our children and youth are some of the best and brightest, and it is a privilege to work with them.

Please consider signing on to be "on call" for those rare occasions when the need for substitute teachers arises. Training, resources, and lesson plans are always provided.

Does your Church Membership form need updating? If you've recently moved, changed your phone number, or changed your email address, it does! In a recent review of our existing Membership forms, we've even noticed that some long-time members of the Parish don't have one at all! Please contact Diane Rhodus at diane.rhodus@yahoo.com to have your form updated.



We want to make sure we can reach you!

NOTES FROM THE LOFT



Give yourself a treat and usher in October with music! **On Monday, the first, at 8:00 p.m.**, join the Los Angeles American Guild of Organists for an extraordinary (free) concert by organist Stewart W. Foster and string quartet at the (Episcopal) Cathedral Center of St. Paul (840 Echo Park Avenue, Los Angeles). Per the LAAGO web site: www.laago.org

Mr. Foster and quartet will perform Handel's organ *Concerto No. 4 in F Major, Four Noels for Organ and Strings* arranged by Albert Zabel, and *Meditation* by Peter Mathews. Solo works by Dietrich Buxtehude, Philip Glass and Maurice Duruflé will also be presented. This varied repertoire will be enhanced by the crisp and clear voicing of the incredible Beckerath tracker organ in the Episcopal Center.

Stewart Wayne Foster is one of the nation's most accomplished organists, winning numerous prizes and performing recitals on some of the world's most prestigious pipe organs. In his role as Organist-in-Residence of First Congregational Church of Los Angeles, he continues to amaze audiences every week with his vast repertoire and artistry in playing one of the world's largest pipe organs.



Back to music at Ascension, choral selections for the month will feature British composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

October 7 – *Give Thanks to God* and *God in Mine Eternity*, both by Alan Bullard (b. 1947).

October 14 – Maurice Bevan (1921-2006) and Cecil Armstrong Gibbs (1889-1960) will be featured with *There's A Wideness in God's Mercy* and *God Be in My Head*, respectively.

October 21 – *Fear Not, O Land* by William H. Harris (1883-1973) and the beloved *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind* by Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-1918).

October 28 – the only non-Brit composer is presented – German composer of the early Romantic period Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) in *Lord in Thy Mercy*. This will be coupled with a setting of *Fairest Lord Jesus* by contemporary British composer Martin How (b. 1931).

How blest we are to experience the richness that music brings to our lives – and to our worship! And how thankful to those who deliver it to us . . .

God be in my head, my heart, my thinking.

Debora Huffman

Director of Music and Organist

Musing with Deacon Ed...

I've been accused of spending too much time on Face Book – true enough. If you don't know about Face Book (FB) or spend time on it, I promise you that you have family and friends who could tell you all about it...if you dare to ask. Since letter writing, telephone calls, and spending time together became extinct, FB has become a useful tool to communicate with family and friends. At the moment I have 770 friends; but compared to some, I'm a lonely guy without a friend in the world. How sad I don't have 3,436 friends like you. When asked how I know all these people – well, I don't and it really doesn't matter. Friends, friends of friends, and friends of friends of friends post “stuff” on FB. Occasionally something strikes a chord and you find yourself sharing it on your page for your friends, and their friends who aren't friends of yours (yet) and who knows where it ends up.

Recently I read a post that really got my attention in a big way. See the thing about FB is that thousands of others saw it too and perhaps it got them thinking and if it did, then that's a good thing. I know that you're dying to know what captured my imagination. Well, here's the quote: **“What if you woke up today with only the things you thanked God for yesterday.”**

I'm big on lists, particularly *gratitude* lists. All day long I thank God for stuff just because I don't want to forget anything and believe me, I forget a lot. But now I'm wondering if I'm being grateful for the right stuff and is there right or wrong stuff. Is there a proper length for lists? Am I wise enough to be grateful for the tough stuff because it stretched me a bit and made me uncomfortable? You really pissed me off today – are you on my list? But I like you, so what if I don't put you on my list? And what if I don't say grace – do I go hungry tomorrow. Maybe if everyone said grace meal or no meal, we'd eradicate hunger in the world. Maybe I just need to be grateful for everything. I think I'll give it a try and see what I end up with tomorrow. In the meantime, I need to check my FB page and see if I have any new friends to be grateful for.

I Will Be
Grateful For
This Day.

If you ever thought about doing the Cropwalk but decided against it because it's too much work, this could be your year. There is a new course that makes it easy for anyone to walk: rather than a long route, the course is a one-mile loop. Participants can walk or run as many laps as they choose.

The Cropwalk is one of Ascension's major outreach efforts. Last year our church was one of the largest per-capita donors to the Pasadena Cropwalk with only the senior youth and a few parishioners walking. This year both the junior and senior youth groups and a parish group will be walking. Our goal is to raise \$1000 this year.



This year's walk is on **Sunday, October 28**. Youth who would like to walk should contact Jobi Harrell (jobi@ascension-sierramadre.com) for pledge sheets. Parishioners Anna Thomas, Keiko Sakatani, and Carol Rasmussen will be walking together; please contact Carol (carol.r@att.net) if you'd like to join them or feel free to walk with your own group.

Whether you walk or not, we hope you will support those who do.



*Summer has come and past
The Innocent can never last...*

October is the birth month of my daughter, and I suspect that has something to do with my being so taken and stirred by its arrival. “*Wake Me Up When September Ends*,” a song by the band Green Day, has become my ‘theme’ song to enter into the new month. The summer is now a memory, the fall routine is no longer new, the rains arrive, and we each continue in our shared journey.

Every October, I am reminded that time passes too quickly. Throughout each year, we all endure pain, losses, and moments of Grace; yet we continue to “*become who we are.*” Despite the many mundane aspects each passing day may have, we each continue to grow. As I pause and reflect on the many differences and similarities from this year to years past, I am most grateful to have been walking this journey with each of you.

Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons

holiday PRIVATE shopping PARTY

When: Saturday, November 10, 2012
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Where: Kersting Court, Sierra Madre



Want to get a jump on your holiday shopping? Savor the Flavor and Leonora Moss will host a private shopping party just for Ascension. 10% of all the purchases made at our private shopping party will be donated to the Church of the Ascension and deposited into the Hospitality account!

While you shop, enjoy a glass of champagne or wine, taste some wonderful hors d'oeuvres and decadent desserts. It is requested that we have a minimum party of 15. Please RSVP to Lisa Reed at lisareed4@verizon.net or 626.357.3908. A sign-up sheet is posted in Hawks Hall.

Savor the Flavor requests that we all arrive on time so that we may make a toast to the Season together.

Enjoy your holidays,

Lisa Reed
Fellowship Ministry Leader

LUNCHEON

SAVE THE DATE!

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP POTLUCK LUNCHEON

When: Saturday, October 27, 2012

Time: 11:30 a.m.

Where: Hawks Hall

Bring a friend!

WOMEN'S ROOM
4th ANNUAL THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON



What can you donate?

This year will mark our fourth year of providing a traditional Thanksgiving meal to the women at the Women's Room for Friends Indeed. The luncheon is on Monday, November 19, 2012. We are once again asking for donations for this wonderful cause including monetary donations, paper products, crafty centerpieces, side dishes, turkey and gravy, desserts, etc. If you can give in any way, please contact either Sandra Dickey or Lisa Reed.



The materials for the CROP Walk are now available. All Jr. & Sr. Youth are encouraged to secure donations and participate in the 2012 CROP Walk. Please see Jobi or Tara if you did not pick up your donation envelope or have any questions.

The 2.3 mile walk is an accessible journey, and there is also a "Short Route" for those wishing to walk a half mile. We will carpool participants to St. Mark's Church, Altadena beginning at 12:30 pm. Bring a water bottle!



And the winner of the wine basket is...

Elizabeth Levie

Congratulations Liz!



Many thanks to all who donated items to the basket and to those who purchased tickets. We raised over \$330 for the Hospitality account.

Lisa Reed
 Fellowship Ministry Leader

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 2012



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 	2 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	3 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	4 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	5	6 9am Parish Work Party 
7 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Noon Blessing of the Animals 	8	9 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	10 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	11 7am Mass 9am Forum	12	13
14 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass The Rev'd Ron David preaches on Pastoral Care 	15	16 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group 7pm Vestry Mtg	17 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	18 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	19	20
21 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Noon Gooden School Sunday 	22	23 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	24 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal SPIRE ARTICLES DUE	25 7am Mass 9am Forum	26	27 11:30am Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon 
28 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Noon PMC Meeting 	29	30 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	31 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal 			