

The SPIRE

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



November 2012

Upcoming Events

November 4th -
All Saints' Day/Fauré Requiem

November 4th -
Deanery 5 Pre-Convention Assembly

November 6th -
Voting Day!

November 10th -
Holiday Shopping Party

November 18th -
Bishop Visit/Confirmation

November 19th -
Women's Room
Thanksgiving Luncheon

November 22nd -
Thanksgiving Mass @ 9am

November 25th -
2nd Annual Wreath Making Event

December 1st -
Parish Work Party



From the Rector

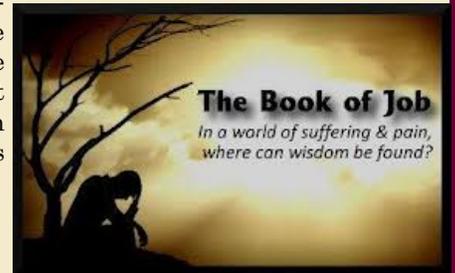
I have been reflecting on the story of Job quite a bit this month. We heard a marvelous sermon from Father Ron David a few weeks ago when he really opened the story up for us. (If you'd like a copy of his sermon, contact the parish office.) The gist of the story, I'm sure you recall, is that a righteous man named Job is blessed with everything – family, livestock, health – and through a series of calamities, he loses everything. The book of Job essentially is a profound and challenging treatise on suffering.

In parallel with meditating on Job, I have been considering several households in our congregation where Alzheimer's or dementia has been creeping in. It is sort of the reverse of Job. People who are suffering from these diseases often have everything – families, homes, and sometimes physical health – and yet they are losing the memory and awareness of these blessings. And their caregivers are left with the questions which Job faced. Why? Why me? How am I supposed to cope with this? Just how bad can things get?

The Job story ends with what some scholars believe is an addition put in much later. Job's well-being is restored, and he lives to see more children and their children. Unfortunately, our dear ones who are dealing with Alzheimer's or dementia don't have such a happy prospect of restoration.

There is no good or easy answer to the question of suffering. But there is always the promise of God's love. It is up to us, the Christian community, to be witness to that enduring love. When we reach out with hands of support and care, we become God's messengers.

MAB+



VESTRY NOMINATIONS DUE NOW

Each January at our annual meeting, we elect three new members of the Vestry, the body within the congregation that, with the Rector, leads the parish. Vestry members are elected for three year terms. The Vestry meets once a month throughout the year. Additional meetings (and committee meetings) are held as needed. A Vestry member must be willing to accept the responsibility of regular attendance and be willing to serve on one or more committees.

Now is the time for the parish to nominate next year's Vestry candidates. According to the Diocesan guidelines, a Vestry nominee must be 16 years of age or older and be a confirmed communicant in good standing in the Episcopal Church. He or she must also attend church services at Ascension regularly and be a pledging contributor to the parish. A member of the Vestry may not be a member of any other church.

Names of nominees should be submitted to Father Michael or any Vestry member by December 1st.

Don't Forget.....

Daylight Savings Time begins
Sunday, November 4th @
2:00am. Move your clocks back
1 hour before going to bed!



SUNDAY,
NOVEMBER 4TH, 2012

THE EPISCOPAL
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
PRESENTS

FAURÉ REQUIEM

BY ASCENSION'S CHOIR

&

SOLOISTS

SUSAN BEACH

BEN BLISS

AND CHARLEY NOECKER

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH, IN OBSERVANCE OF ALL SAINTS' DAY, THE 10:15 SERVICE WILL FEATURE GABRIEL FAURE'S INCOMPARABLE *REQUIEM IN D MINOR, OP. 48*. VARIOUS MOVEMENTS OF THE WORK WILL BE SUNG AT THEIR CORRESPONDING LITURGICAL MOMENTS DURING THE MASS.

THE FOREMOST FRENCH ORGANIST AND COMPOSER OF HIS TIME, FAURE (1845-1924) WROTE *REQUIEM* BETWEEN 1887 AND 1890. THE BEST KNOWN OF FAURE'S LARGER WORKS, ITS MOST FAMOUS MOVEMENT IS THE SOPRANO ARIA *PIE JESU*. ADDITIONAL MOVEMENTS INCLUDE *INTROIT AND KYRIE, SANCTUS, AGNUS DEI, LIBERA ME, AND IN PARADISUM*. BE SURE TO ARRIVE EARLY — *LIBERA ME* WILL BE SUNG AS THE OPENING CHORAL VOLUNTARY!

DEBORA HUFFMAN, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC AND ORGANIST

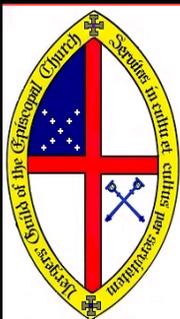
EVERYONE WELCOME

The pale, low-angle sunlight of November casts sharp, lengthening shadows around the grounds of Church of the Ascension, appropriate to the gravity of the month. Beginning with All Saints and All Souls Days, proceeding through Thanksgiving, and culminating in the feast of Christ the King and the end of the liturgical year, November provides ample opportunities for requiems, remembrance, reflection, and reverence for those so inclined.

November is the spiritual home of the bittersweet *bright sadness* that characterizes those who find themselves in what Richard Rohr calls “the second half of life.” (See Rohr’s *Falling Upward*, recently featured in the Rector’s Forum). For Father Richard, to simultaneously embrace sorrow and joy, regret and gratitude, failure and hope is to live into the rich paradox at the center of our being.

In an essay some years ago in *The New Yorker*, E.B. White recounted the response of his 92-year-old Aunt Caroline after he apologized for failing to take her on a scenic drive through the autumnal splendor of New England. “It’s all right,” she said, “Remembrance is sufficient of the beauty we have seen.” (I wish my relatives said things like that.) May your November be filled with reverence and remembrance, sad and beautiful as the maples in Aunt Caroline’s autumn.

Jay Packer, Senior Warden



The Verger's Rant

Before you know it, **December 1st** will be here and we will arrive at another work party day! This will be a special work day in that we must be quiet. WHY? Stillpoint, the Center for Christian Spirituality, will be holding a retreat here in Hawks Hall. That being said, we will do some painting in the parish house. Bring your brush and drop cloth and join the party.

The last work party was a heavy-lifting day. We removed a large amount of growth from the north wall of the play ground so the kids wouldn't be putting out their eyes. ©So, the December 1st work day (8:30 – 12:00) will be an easy time. See you then!

CALLING ALL ARCHIVES!

The Archives Committee is still looking for the following: photographs, special event leaflets, (Christmas, Easter, etc.), or anything pertinent to the history of Ascension. If you wish to keep your originals, we are able to make copies and return the originals to you. Please include your name with your items to ensure a safe return.



Please contact Beverly Clifton at 626-355-0863 or Beth Smith-Kellock at 626-355-8637 - or - leave your items in the Archive mail slot in the supply room across the hall from the Parish Office. Thank you so much for your support, interest, and assistance.

By the time you read this, the formal portion of the 2013 Stewardship Campaign at Church of the Ascension will have mercifully concluded.

Many thanks to all the parishioners who made a pledge of time, talent, or financial resources by returning their 2013 Stewardship Pledge cards. Monetary pledges enable our Vestry to establish a realistic budget for the coming year. Remember that if your economic situation changes, you may contact the church office to revise your pledge at any time. Updating your pledge helps ensure that the church budget remains accurate and up to date throughout the year.

For those of you fundamentalists in the procrastinator sect of the Anglican Communion, there is Good News. A stewardship dispensation, yea verily I say, outright stewardship *amnesty* will be available throughout the entire month of November. All you need do is return your pledge card to the church office, and all will be forgiven. Go and sin no more.

If you inadvertently misplaced or did not receive your stewardship packet by mail, please pick one up at the back of the Church or contact the Church office.

**Thank you very much
for your commitment to
Church of the
Ascension.**





The Bishop is Coming...The Bishop is Coming

On January 14, 2005, my esteemed colleague and friend, the Rev. Canon Diane Bruce preached at my ordination. A great deal has changed since then, and the Spirit has charted new and exciting courses for both of us. On that evening in 2005, I didn't imagine that I would be a Canon and serving as your deacon. Nor did I imagine that Diane would be Bishop Diane, and I would be preparing for her visit to our parish on **Sunday, November 18th, 2012**.

Each congregation is scheduled to have a bishop visit every other year. In a large diocese which encompasses a very large geographic area, this is no easy task for our bishops; and neither is keeping track of all their visits. Although each bishop is assigned a particular geographic area, they visit congregations throughout the diocese. We are fortunate that in this diocese we get to spend time as a diocesan family with all our bishops.

As Bishop Bruno's Chaplain, one of my responsibilities was to prepare the annual visitation schedule...not always an easy task. Aside from the administrative details, my fondest memories were accompanying Bishop Bruno on his visitations and over the years being privileged to visit almost every congregation in the diocese. Whenever a parish hears the call...the Bishop is coming, the Bishop is coming – every parish springs into action, putting their best foot forward. There's always a flurry of activity designed to make everything perfect and, most importantly, to extend the finest hospitality to our esteemed visitors. In all honesty, I used to think "What's the big to-do? It's only the bishop after all." Now that the shoes on the other foot and I get to experience the "to-do," I must admit it's really exciting. I know for certain that every Sunday is special for our Bishops, and they too experience a flurry of activity to make their visit special and to extend the finest episcopal hospitality. The truth be told, the Bishops may be more excited than we are.

Bishop Diane will be among us as one who celebrates the Holy Eucharist, preaches the Gospel, and invokes the Holy Spirit through the sacrament of Confirmation.

I remember to this day that at the end of the ordination sermon, Bishop Bruce charged me to remember that I will do my best work for the church when I'm exhausted and don't think I can do any more. Then I can stand back, get out of the way, and allow the Holy Spirit to do her work. Bishop Diane is one of the hardest working bishops I've met. Don't for a moment underestimate her inexhaustible supply of energy, love, and dedication not just to the church, the diocese, but to each one of us. I invite each of you to participate in my excitement and welcome my friend, mentor, and Bishop to Ascension. And last but not least, a reminder that I'm not the only one in the diocese who knows how to talk "good."

Deacon Ed Sniecienski

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

On Sunday, November 4, in observance of All Saints' Day, the 10:15 service will feature Gabriel Faure's incomparable *Requiem in D Minor, Op. 48*. Presented by Ascension's choir and soloists Susan Beach, Ben Bliss, and Charley Noecker, various movements of the work will be sung at their corresponding liturgical moments. The foremost French organist and composer of his time, Faure (1845-1924) wrote *Requiem* between 1887 and 1890. The best known of Faure's larger works, its most famous movement is the soprano aria *Pie Jesu*. Additional movements include *Introit and Kyrie, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, Libera Me, and In Paradisum*. Be sure to arrive early – *Libera Me* will be sung as the opening choral voluntary!

The month having been ushered in by Faure, November will conclude with our annual Thanksgiving service and Christ the King Sunday on November 25, culminating the end of the liturgical year.

*Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem.
Merciful Jesus, grant them rest.*



Debora Huffman
Director of Music and Organist



Melinda & Star



Fr. Bamberger blessing the animals



Anne & Joey

*Another great time had by all (including our pets!).... at the
2012 Blessing of the Animals Ceremony*



Fr. Bamberger, Deacon Ed & Polo



Jan & Mark with Pet Treats Galore!



Bonnie,
Ginger,
Olivia,
&
Riley

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.

Guess Who....

Hal Barber III, Bill Barber, and Hal Barber IV at Katie Barber's rehearsal dinner.



October 26, 2012

Photos by Father Bamberger



Wedding Photo
Bride: Katie Barber
Groom: Jordan Bronson

Chillicothe, Ohio - October 27, 2012



Many times I state when meeting someone for the first time: “My name is not Jodi; my name is Jobi, as in the book of Job. It means persecuted.” When Rev. Ron David preached on October 14th, I was initially delighted to have such an emphasis on the story of Job. That was until he also cited the meaning of Job’s name and took it one step further by taking it into modern translation: Job means hated. My given name (JoAnna) means God’s grace, and many times throughout my life I have unsuccessfully tried to reclaim it. I am Jobi. It is who I am. Although my nickname has a less than desirable meaning, I cling fervently to the fact that I am God’s beloved. Job; and every single one of us who ever came into existence is also God’s beloved.

As this Liturgical year draws to a close, I find myself breathing a sigh of relief. Somewhere in my youth, for reasons unbeknownst to me, I dubbed Year B as: “B for Blah.” There was no good reason for me to do so, and this year in particular was anything but “blah.” In all truth, I suspect that my disdain had something to do with the book of Job being such a large portion of the conclusion of the season of Pentecost in year B. What ever flippant notion caused me to write off an entire year of the revised common lectionary, I have learned so much this year. Sometimes facing who you are and the story of your own journey, no matter how painful, is a crucial undertaking to move forward.

As Advent approaches, we are blessed with the reminder and renewed hope of God’s love for all with the miracle of Christmas. I eagerly await the beginning of Year C (which, by the way, I dubbed “C is cool.”) and a chance to start anew. No matter what name we carry or the name of the liturgical year, the seasons of Advent and Christmas give yet another chance to allow Christ Jesus to permeate our lives and our hearts. We are each given the privilege and challenge to spread the name of our Lord’s beloved Son. Whether it’s Emmanuel, the Prince of Peace, the Son of God, the Lamb of God, Savior, the Alpha and Omega – the name we use doesn’t matter. What does matter is that we know that God’s love for us allowed for this glorious gift, and it is up to us to share the good news.

Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons



CALL FOR GREENERY!

Evergreens, holly, and other California native plant clippings are needed to make this year’s wreath making celebration a success. Please drop off your contributions any time after November 22nd or bring them to church on the morning of November 25th before 9 AM. Thank You for your help in making this event as wonderful as it was last year!

Make your clippings last longer ~ Place them in a plastic bag (loosely sealed to prevent mildew) with a few teaspoons of water.



Ascension Prepares for Christmas!

Advent is the first season of the church year! Join us on November 25th (the last Sunday before Advent) during the 9 AM Sunday school hour in Hawks Hall as Sunday school students host our second annual wreath making event. We will supply the wreath forms and ask that those who participate provide a sturdy plate and candles (with the colors of your choosing: 3 blue or purple and one pink or all white). Just as we did last year, we are also requesting donations of greenery clippings (evergreens, pine, berries, and other items from your yard) so that each wreath may be decorated in the natural materials of God’s creation.

For more information contact:
Jobi Harrell at jobi@ascension-sierramadre.com



holiday PRIVATEshopping 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

2012 Christmas Pageant

Time: 5:00 pm

Date: December 24th, Christmas Eve Family Service



*This year's performance will be an adaptation of Charles Tazewell's classic story: **The Littlest Angel**. All children and youth are invited to participate.*

Dates to Remember

Sign-ups: Start September 16th
Part Assignments: November 18th
Rehearsals Begin: December 15th

The family study book for the 2012 Christmas Pageant:

Contact: jobi@ascensionsierramadre.com

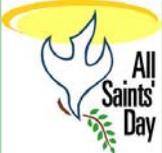


Our vision is that *The Episcopal Church of the Ascension* serves Christ today for those who will come to know Christ tomorrow.

WORSHIP, FORMATION, PASTORAL CARE, FELLOWSHIP, OUTREACH, PRESENCE

25 E. Laurel Avenue, Sierra Madre, CA 91024 ~ 626-355-1133 www.ascension-sierramadre.com

November/December 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			October 31st Halloween 6pm Mass Cancelled	1 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	2	3
4 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass ~ a special presentation of Faure's Requiem by the Ascension Choir 	5	6 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group 	7 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	8 7am Mass 9am Forum	9	10 Holiday Shopping Party 6:30 p.m. 
11 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Noon PMC Meeting	12	13 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	14 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	15 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	16	17
18 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass ~ Bishop Visit & Confirmation 	19 WOMEN'S ROOM 4th ANNUAL THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON	20 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group 7pm Vestry Meeting	21 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	22 Thanksgiving Mass @ 9:00 am	23	24
25 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 9am—2nd Annual Wreath Making Event 	26 DECEMBER SPIRE ARTICLES DUE	27 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	28 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	29 7am Mass 9am Forum	30	DECEMBER 1st Parish Work Party 8:30 a.m. 