



The SPIRE

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



Upcoming Events

March 7th -
Church Bread Makers Meet

March 10th -
*1st Lenten Check-In @ 9 am
*2nd Lenten Check-In @ 11:45 am

March 16th—
Safe Church Training

March 17th -
Parish Ministry Council Meeting

March 19th -
Vestry Meeting

March 25th -
Church Leadership Retreat

March 28th—
Nail Painting Party @ 5 pm

March 30th -
Easter Egg Decorating Party

March 31st -
*1st Easter Brunch
& Easter Egg Hunt @ 8 am
*2nd Easter Brunch
& Easter Egg Hunt @ Noon

March 2013

From the Rector



As we reach the mid-point of Lent, I am already starting to anticipate and get ready to participate in the traditions of Ascension's Holy Week and Easter. A parishioner who is experiencing her second Easter with us at Ascension recently commented to me that this year she hopes she has the insider's background for our Holy Week and Easter. I thought immediately of the "secret" menu at In-N-Out for "animal-style," the fact that you can order a "four by four" if you're that hungry. This option is not obviously apparent if you don't know where to look – it's not on the menu sign - but it is available. It's much the same with our observance of Holy Week and Easter – while we have a clear description of the services and the schedules available, there are some helpful tips which might make things even better for everyone.

For example, on Palm Sunday, it helps to know that there are actually two themes at work in our services. The service begins with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, but then fast forwards to the Passion. Traditionally the palms that are distributed to the people at the beginning of the service are taken home, kept throughout the year, and then returned to the church before the next Shrove Tuesday to be burned and made into ashes for Ash Wednesday.
Continued on Next Page....



Holy Week/Easter Services

Palm Sunday Mass (Rite I) Mass (Rite II)	March 24 8:00 AM 10:15 AM
Monday, Holy Week Mass	March 25 7:00 PM
Tuesday, Holy Week Mass	March 26 7:00 PM
Tenebrae Mass	March 27 7:00 PM
Maundy Thursday Mass Foot Washing and Mass Watch at Altar of Repose	March 28 7:00 AM 7:00 PM 9:00 -12 AM
Good Friday Watch at Altar of Repose Stations of the Cross Good Friday Liturgy	March 29 6:00 -11 AM Noon 7:00 PM
Holy Saturday Youth Group Party	March 30 10:00 AM
Easter Day The Great Vigil and 1 st Eucharist of Easter Festival High Mass	March 31 6:00 AM 10:15 AM

YOUR FLOWERS ~OUR GARDEN

The **Altar of Repose**, set up on Maundy Thursday, is our re-creation of the Garden of Gethsemane, the garden where our Lord prayed before his arrest and trial. **We need the flowers from your garden to decorate our garden.** Please bring your flowers on Maundy Thursday to the church chapel in a disposable container (or put your name on the bottom of the container)... All flower types are welcome, large or small, any color...

Sunday, March 10th is Daylight Savings!

Less sleep Sunday



Continued from Previous Page.... From the Rector

Monday through Friday evenings of Holy Week, there are services at 7:00 in the church. Monday and Tuesday evenings we celebrate Eucharist together.

Wednesday is the service of Tenebrae. Another piece of “insider” information is that the lighting at this service gets progressively darker; and some people bring a small penlight to be able to read the bulletin towards the end of the service.

The service on Maundy Thursday evening is also a liturgy that shifts in theme as it unfolds. It begins with foot washing and then focuses on Communion, ending with the opportunity to take some time to Watch at the Altar of Repose. So a helpful tip might be that if you wish to have your feet washed, wear sandals or shoes and stockings that are easily removed. As with the Anglican position on private confession, the rule regarding having your feet washed is the same – “all may, none must, some should...” It really is up to you to decide. The Watch at the Altar of Repose is another personal decision. We have a sign-up sheet so that we can insure that while the Watch is under way, there will be someone in attendance for the whole time. But people are welcome to sign-up to watch at the same time as someone else. (The sign-up sheet will be out the Last Sunday of Lent, Palm Sunday, and through Holy Week up until Maundy Thursday.) Some people may ask what does one do while “on watch?” Again, different people do different things. Some people just sit in silence. Others read from Scripture or devotional materials. Some sing (to themselves in silence) hymns, and I’ve been known to listen to Good Friday music on my Ipod. Some people pray the rosary. Others journal. I’ve seen people cross-stitching and knitting. The Watch ultimately is a time to be in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in anticipation of Good Friday and Easter. We restored a tradition last year – bringing flowers from our own yards to decorate the Altar of Repose. You can bring flowers any time on Maundy Thursday or bring them with you when you attend the Maundy Thursday evening service.

At our Good Friday services, be prepared for solemnity and simplicity. At the noon service we walk the Stations of the Cross beginning in the church, walking the church grounds, and ending back in the church. The evening service follows the Liturgy for Good Friday including the Veneration of the Cross.

Easter is a whole different story. We try to be as festive as possible. While we begin the Vigil in the cold before dawn, we move into light and joy. (It helps that Daylight Savings Time begins March 10th! The time change guarantees that we will start in darkness and be able to see the sun rise together as we gather at the outdoor font.) People often bring bells of all types to be rung during our Easter Services. Families with kids may want to bring baskets or bags for the children to use during the Easter Egg hunts. This year we will have an egg hunt after each service. We have an “organized” potluck brunch following the services, and there are sign-up sheets on our bulletin board for you to tell us what you are bringing. And by the way, anytime we have a sign-up sheet, you can call the office and ask that your name be added to any of the sign-up sheets – you don’t have to personally add your name if you forget, are in a rush, or you don’t know where the list is located.

Just thinking about all we have to share this Holy Week has heightened my anticipation. ***Blessings, MAB+***

FEBRUARY, 26TH
BAD WEATHER SHELTER DINNER RECAP



Colette Ostrye, Mandy Macintosh, Sandy Cozier, & Keiko Sakatani were part of the kitchen crew.

Ascension's second bad weather shelter dinner of the year was highly successful with all the food we prepared happily consumed by some 170 guests. Kudos to Karen Mooradian for spending many hours shopping and cooking, and to Tim Hayden for single-handedly chopping about 18 pounds of onions in preparation for the dinner. Again this month, we were graced with many first-time volunteers; but I would like especially to acknowledge the hard work of Bronwyn and Seamus Dodd, Mandy and Elliott Mackintosh, Mike Ruble, Mike Beach, and Charley Noecker who served at both dinners.

Carol Rasmussen, Outreach Ministry Leader



Chris Bamberger, Tim Hayden, & Seamus Dodd preparing the sleeping area for the guests.



Food is plated and ready for the first guests.



Outreach Ministry

Our next outreach effort will be to provide Easter baskets for the Friends In Deed community--both children and adults. We will happily accept donations of small-sized Easter baskets, candy, chocolate bunnies, plastic eggs, and any other treats that you like. There will be a separate box in the parish hall for these donations along with the box for the food pantry. Please make your donation no later than Palm Sunday, March 24.

Carol Rasmussen

Easter Flower Donations Needed!

Lent is our most austere church season: purple frontal, wood candlesticks, and NO flowers. Easter, however, is our most joyous church season: white frontal, brass candlesticks, and LOTS AND LOTS OF FLOWERS.

Please help St. Anne's Altar Guild make this Easter a beautiful offering to our Risen Lord. Flower donation envelopes are available at the back of the church. Thanking you in advance for your generous donation for flowers. *Lynne Holl, Altar Guild Directress*



I would put a picture here but it would just distract you.

The theology of wilderness has two sides. The first we find purposely, attempting to be quiet and find clarity, to experience God's still voice. The second is a more challenging wilderness – one of painful loneliness, disorientation, and an isolation few of us would choose.

We are not meant to stay in either wilderness scenario. Living into the fullness of life God envisions for us cannot be done in the wilderness. Following Jesus' example, we create periods of stillness and retreat so that we may return to reengage the world.

Following Jesus' example, when we see our brothers and sisters struggling in a wilderness of isolation, our duty is to light the way back home.

The wilderness of Lent is a tool for resurrection in our lives. Living in the wilderness enables us to hear God's voice in our lives and to discern His will so that we can reengage the world as Jesus did when He returned from the desert. Lent lies on Easter's path as an optimistic reminder that change is difficult, but possible and leads to new life.

Yes, Lent is 40 days; but more importantly, Lent is about the rest of your life. In some respects, Lent can feel a bit selfish – full of introspection and self-interest. But keep in mind it's hard to put something on (like service to others) without taking something off that might distract you. Be alert to what your new life offers to others around you.

If, this Lent, you are struggling in a wilderness of distraction, know that there are people in this world who can help you out. If you are entering the wilderness to hear God's voice, blessings on the journey there and back. In either case, know that life may have a thousand Lents, but they will always be followed by a thousand Easters.

Deacon Ed+

I would like to recognize and have everyone thank Beverly Clifton and Beth Smith- Kellock for all the time and effort they have put into organizing and cataloging the Church's archives. It has truly been a labor of love.

Did you think your ears were finally clearing after the long flu season? Actually that was the hard work that Charlie Noecker has been putting into repairing and upgrading the sound system. We noticed it worked flawlessly throughout the 8 and 10:15 services. Thank you Charlie.

I'm proud of you! **WOW** WAY 2 GO
 Awesome Most Improved Outstanding
 You did your best!
 WELL DONE Good Effort Super
 AMAZING GREAT JOB

The 2013 Church Leadership Retreat is scheduled for Monday March 25th at 6:00pm in Hawks Hall. The Vestry, Parish Ministry Council and Staff will meet to develop goals for the coming year. There will be a review of the activities, programs, facilities, and the various Ministries of the Church. We will be looking at these areas from a new perspective of focusing on the assets and talents that we have in the church and the community. We welcome your ideas, concerns, and suggestions. Do not hesitate to contact me at Davidmole11@gmail.com.

David Mole, Senior Warden

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

I find myself still singing our February music, especially Franck's amazing *Psalm 150* and Bortniansky's exquisite *Cherubim Song* from the Sunday before Lent; and, from the 24th, Walter Pelz' hauntingly beautiful *O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days* and *Love and Mercy*. Sincere thanks to Jobi Harrell for her oboe artistry on the Pelz anthems! Also, many thanks to Geraldine Keeling who so capably substituted for me on the 17th as I was recuperating from gall bladder surgery.

We enter March deep into Lent and exit with the glory of Easter – remarkable music will mark the seasons:

On March 3 sopranos Susan Beach and Carol Rasmussen will be joined by the choir in Mendelssohn's *I Waited for the Lord*. During communion Bach's *Suscepit Israel*, from *Magnificat*, will be sung by soprano Susan Beach, soprano Colette Ostrye, and mezzo-soprano Keiko Sakatani.

Incomparable cellist Marek Szpakiewicz will return to Ascension on March 10, joining the choir in Faure's beloved *Cantique de Jean Racine* and a Walter Pelz' rendition of *Psalm 121*.

Craig Courtney's poignant *Teach Me Thy Way*, coupled with Antonio Lotti's haunting *Vere Languores Nostros (He Bore Our Sorrows)* will be featured on the 17th.

On Palm/Passion Sunday, March 24, the choir will celebrate the Palms with *Hosanna to the Living God* by Robert Lau, followed by our commemoration of the Passion of our Lord. Once again cellist Marek Szpakiewicz will adorn settings of *Were You There* (Raymond Haan) and *O Sacred Head* (Hans Hassler arranged by Bradley Nelson).

On Maundy Thursday, the 28th, per tradition, Durufle's *Ubi Caritas* will be sung during foot-washing, followed by *I Give You A New Commandment* (Peter Aston). During communion we turn to the Taize chant, *Eat This Bread*.

The musical highlight of Good Friday, March 29, will be *Crux Fidelis* by John IV, King of Portugal, to accompany the veneration of the cross.

Finally – EASTER! Choir and congregation join together in our festive services – beginning with the *Choral Fanfare on Jesus Christ is Risen Today* leading into the traditional *EASTER HYMN*. Congregation and choir will sing the *Concertato on Thine Is the Glory*. Choral music will include an exciting setting of *O Sons and Daughters (O Filii et Filiae)* by Donald Livingston and Jane Marshall's *Awake, My Lute*. Trumpeter Jay Cohen and oboist Sean Dougall will join together in Bach's *My Spirit Be Joyful* as the opening voluntary for the 10:15 service – of course, they'll be playing throughout the entirety of both services. As always, the closing voluntary will be the Widor *Toccata from Symphony V*. What better way to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord?!

The choir and I welcome you to actively participate in the listening experience of our musical offerings this month, leading you into deeper, more meaningful worship.

An early wish to each of you for a most happy Easter festival!

Debora Huffman
Director of Music and Organist



Easter is on March 31st this year. Please consider making a contribution to our music fund for the special music we enjoy. Music offering envelopes are available at the back of the Church.



Save the Date!
Saturday, May 25, 2013
Afternoon Spring Tea
Hawks Hall

Proceeds will benefit the Hospitality & Coffee Hour accounts and a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to the Women's Room of Friends Indeed.

More information to come regarding time and ticket sales.

Spotlight on Singers

Lifelong singers **Carol Rasmussen and Charley Noecker** joined the choir in November, 2011 - at the same time they first began attending Ascension. Coming to us from Boulder, Colorado, the couple previously lived in Boston. They have three daughters, all of whom have sung in the Ascension choir when in town. Oldest daughter Julia is currently doing a U.S. State Department internship in Tallinn, Estonia; twins Betsy and Lindy are students at the University of Colorado. Betsy is a journalism major and plays in the student orchestra; and Lindy is a history major and first chair cellist in the student orchestra. Both Betsy and Lindy are cellists and have performed a cello duo as an opening voluntary at Ascension. The Noecker family singers comprised the choral core for our post-Christmas Sunday worship: Charley's mother Peggy (N.J.), sister Sarah (San Diego), and uncle (Chicago) joining Charley, Carol, and daughter. Carol's incredible, still-active parents (Nebraska) are in their late 90s – she's one of nine children in a blended family; her nuclear family numbers about 75.



Carol, a freelance writer specializing in climate change, was a writer and editor in the National Center for Atmospheric Research's public information office while in Colorado. She volunteers for Reading Partners, tutoring two elementary-aged children who have trouble reading, and teaches an English as a Second Language class on Thursday nights. In addition to singing in the choir, Carol's involved in Ascension's Outreach program. She loves hiking and is beginning to enjoy the trails in the San Gabriels.

A soprano – and pianist - Carol has sung in choruses as long as she can remember, starting in elementary school in Livermore, CA; continuing through school and church choirs as they moved to West Virginia and then Nebraska; and on to college choirs and community choirs. The first "prestige" group she sang with, "way back in the dark ages," was Antonia Brico's chorus with the Brico Symphony. Her main credits are the Ars Nova Singers in Colorado, where, incidentally, Charley and she met; the Back Bay Chorale in Boston; the Boulder Bach Festival; the Colorado Music Festival under Michael Christie; and St. John's Cathedral Singers in Denver (not all at the same time!). One of her most rewarding musical experiences was as the only non-student with the University of Colorado's University Singers (their elite 16-voice group) on a choral tour of China in 2001, under Joan Conlon. Charley and she both sang with a larger chorus on the same trip.

Baritone Charley, an optical engineer at JPL, worked at Ball Aerospace in Colorado. His choral experience began in the junior choir at the Episcopal Church in Middletown, N.J., followed by high school choir (also at Middletown), then Swarthmore College Choir, with whom he sang in the studio recording and Carnegie Hall world premier of the PDQ Bach Liebeslider Polkas (more than likely, Carol was in the audience for one of these performances!). As a college graduate, for several years Charley sang in the Boulder Bach Festival; in 1985 Margaret Hillis was the guest conductor for the Bach St. Matthew Passion, the pinnacle of his singing career. Then came the Ars Nova Chamber Singers, the choir at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Boulder, and the Back Bay Chorale (Boston). Charley's other musical experiences have included singing in barbershop and doo-wop music.

Currently both Charley and Carol sing in the Pasadena Master Chorale, which last year performed the Rachmaninoff *Vespers* – a second choral pinnacle for Charley.

Interested in cycling, hiking, and camping, Charley's dabbled in theater lighting and sound, and church sound and podcasts. At Ascension Charley has assumed leadership of the sanctuary sound system.

Both Charley and Carol have served as soloists here at Ascension. Charley enjoys singing in the choir because "music is as essential as food for me, singing is praying, and the choir is like family. I particularly like the music we do." Carol can't imagine life without singing, so, "honestly, it's just who I am." She hopes she's enhancing the congregation's worship experience. And of course she likes hanging out with the choir members - "a very entertaining group of people!"

We continue to be thrilled that the Rasmussen-Noeckers have chosen to affiliate with Ascension – and with Ascension's choir!

Debora Huffman

Director of Music and Organist

**YOUTH GROUP MAUNDY THURSDAY
NAIL PAINTING PARTY**

March 28th at 5 P.M.

Last year was so much fun, we're going to do it again!

Join us in Hawks Hall for pre-service pedicures!

All are invited to join us (that means: you don't have to be under 18!!!) for this fun gathering.



Please RSVP to Jobi Harrell 626-710-3021

SAFE CHURCH TRAINING WORKSHOP

Led By: The Very Rev. Can. Michael Bamberger

MARCH 16th 9 am – 12 pm in Hawks Hall

This training is designed to increase awareness regarding sexual misconduct and abuse of power, to outline steps toward preventing abuse, to offer ways to intervene when misconduct occurs and to equip anyone in a position of parish leadership with ways of healing and rebuilding the body of Christ.

The training is required of all clergy and diocesan employees. It is also intended for wardens, vestry members, lay Eucharistic visitors, pastoral visitors, youth leaders, Confirmation sponsors, acolyte leaders, choir directors, church school teachers, volunteers working in a congregation on a regular basis, and all employees of congregations.

THE RECTOR IS REALLY INTO THE EASTER VIGIL.



A bit of humor provided by Life at St. Swithin's, the Rev. Jay Sidebotham...



YOUTH GROUP INFO

Youth Lenten Fundraiser—Ascension Reusable shopping bags will be on sale through March 24th for \$2.00

YOUTH EASTER EGG COLORING & STUFFING PARTY

March 30th
10 am – 12 pm

EASTER EGG HUNT

March 31st
8 am & 12 pm



That's right! This year, Ascension will host TWO Easter Egg Hunts. Since we anticipate a larger quantity of egg seekers, donations of plastic eggs, candy, stickers, and small toys would be greatly appreciated to offset additional costs. Please bring them to the Youth table outside of church by March 24th.



Do you have a few hours to spare in the next week or two? I need help with some miscellaneous office tasks (*filing, binding, copying, sorting, etc.*). Call Kim at the Parish Office ~ 626-355-1133.

Thank You!

Attention Ascension!

All Students in 7th – 12th Grades are invited to:

Love God. Serve the hungry. Do the Famine.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of students in the U.S. and around the world unite to do the Famine. They learn about hunger, raise funds to help the hungry, and then go hungry themselves.



**30 Hour Famine
APRIL 26th - 27th**

Students will begin their fast after lunch on April 26th.

At 5 PM meet in the Parish House for a fun-filled 24 hours of learning, games, service and lots of juice! Friends & family are invited to join the final worship break-fast meal in Hawks Hall at 4:30 pm. Contact Jobi Harrell at jobiharrell@gmail.com for more information.

Easter Potluck Brunches

This year we will once again be serving two Easter Potluck Brunches, the first one will be following the Sunrise Service and the second will be following the 10:15 Service. The Hospitality Committee will provide hams for each brunch. Sign-up sheets for suggested potluck items for you to bring are on the bulletin board in Hawks Hall.

Happy Easter to All!

Lisa Reed, Fellowship Ministry Leader



Wake Up Call

When things go wrong, I grow frustrated. More often than I care to admit, I find myself wallowing in a personal pity party. I want a life without imperfection, not peaceful acceptance. I want a life that is all Alleluias.

I have tried various ways of coping with the pain I feel when life gets hard. The Kübler-Ross model, the hypothesis commonly referred to as the "five stages of grief," sums up many of the reactions I experience in tough times.



Denial:	Just ignoring the bad things that are happening in the world or in my own life.
Anger:	Why is this happening to me and why now?
Bargaining:	If I do x, y and/or z, I can change this.
Depression:	What is the point in trying to do anything? I can't change what's happening.

I'm really good at those four steps. As I look at the various ways I run away from strife, I long to achieve the final step in the process: Acceptance.

Although I am now mature enough to accept the fact that bad things happen, I still don't like this side of life very much. This Lent, I have tried to recognize that acceptance might not ever be my initial reaction to strife. I mean I still am struggling to accept the fact that humanity was the direct source of Christ's crucifixion. Each Passion reading I like to pretend that it was not me that said: "Crucify Him!" Yet as each year passes, I am gradually coming to accept that Easter can't happen without Good Friday. The cross came before the empty tomb. As easy as it is to accept the glorious Easter sunrise, I know there were a multitude of painful events that had to take place for that day to arrive. The Alleluia of Easter only comes after all the pain.

Although I am not completely reconciled with the parts of my life's journey I don't personally like, I can accept that God is cool with my ever-changing reactions. God loves all of us so much that despite the pain we cause and experience, the resurrection is always waiting for us. **Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons**

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 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2 Lenten Retreat with Deacon Ed
3 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass	4	5 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	6 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	7 7am Mass 9am Forum Church Bread Makers Meet	8	9
Father Bamberger in Staten Island for ER&D						
10 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Lenten Check-In follows each service in Hawks Hall DAYLIGHT SAVINGS!	11	12 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	13 5:30pm Yoga 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	14 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	15	16 Safe Church Training 9am—Noon Hawks Hall
17 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Noon PMC Meeting 	18	19 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group 7pm Vestry Meeting	20 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	21 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	22	23 Hanging of the Palms in the Church
24 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 	25 APRIL SPIRE ARTICLES DUE Church Leadership Retreat 6pm Hawks Hall	26 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	27 TENEBRAE 6pm Mass 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	28 MAUNDY THURSDAY 7am Mass 9am Forum *DOK Meeting *Nail Painting Party @ 5pm Hawks Hall	29 GOOD FRIDAY	30 HOLY SATURDAY Easter Egg Decorating Party 10am—Noon Hawks Hall
HOLY WEEK ~ Front Page of Newsletter Shows Service Dates & Times for Holy Week & Easter						
31 6am The Great Vigil & 1st Eucharist of Easter 10:15am Festival High Mass Easter Brunch & Egg Hunt follows each service. 	1	2	3	4	5	6 Parish Work Party
Father Bamberger out of town—Commissioning Ministry Visits						