



# The SPIRE

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



## Upcoming Events

April 7th -  
Funeral/Reception ~ Abbe Keith

April 16th -  
Vestry Meeting

April 18th -  
Clericus Meeting

April 20th -  
Safe Church Training

April 20th -  
Funeral/Reception ~ Ron Mosier

April 25th -  
Daughters of the King Meet

April 26th - April 27th  
30 Hour Famine

April 27th -  
Women's Fellowship Potluck  
Luncheon

April 28th -  
Despedida for Father John  
Larson & Barbara Larson

## APRIL 2013

### From the Rector

Now that we are in Eastertide, I want to say a few words of thanks to everyone who made our celebration so wonderful. The Altar Guild gave a tremendous amount of effort to support our worship. The Choir, under Dr. Deb's direction, performed marvelously. Lisa Reed and the fellowship folks saw to it we had an abundance of food for the feast. The young people did wonderfully as well. And thanks to my clergy colleagues for the variety of voices in the sanctuary.

This month we will be saying so long to a few friends. Cora Campbell, who has been our childcare and kitchen assistant since 2010, has been offered a full-time position with the Temecula School District in the field for which she has been training. We congratulate her for her achievement and wish her well in her relocation. (We have been receiving many resumes and hope to fill the position within a few weeks.) Father John and Barbara Larson are moving up to Santa Barbara at the end of this month. Their ten years here with us have been a blessing in so many ways. We will miss them all as we wish them happiness in these changes.

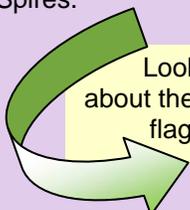
Looking ahead, the Vestry and leadership are working on some strategic goals for the next few years. We are using an approach based on a principle called Assets Based Congregational Development. Rather than beginning with identified needs or problems, we begin by identifying our assets as a congregation. Our people, our property, our programs, and our funds are all considered assets. You can expect to hear more about this endeavor in the coming months.

Easter blessings, **MAB+**



### SPECIAL MEMORIES FROM ASCENSION'S ARCHIVES

Beverly Clifton and Beth Smith Kellock feel that our current parishioners would be interested in some of the treasures and facts about Ascension that they have uncovered in their work on Ascension's Archives Committee. We agree and think you will too. Look forward to learning about some of their other finds in future Spires.



Look Inside to read  
about the history of the  
flags in Hawks Hall.

### A NOTE FROM MOTHER JENNIFER BEAL

Dear Members of Ascension,

Thank you all, for the most glorious Holy Week and Easter I have experienced in five years: yes, not since I left. I am always so glad to witness the growth and changes in your parish life. I saw ministries both new and concluded. I met the next generations of youth, children, and altar servers. Also, I mourned the holes left by the deaths of those who are loved. Finally, I got to witness a Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child (BCP page 440). Such signs of vital life these are! Oh, thank you!

Next month, I will write about the pleasure I find listening to Ascension's music and sermons on my computer from Concord, MA.

Have a blessed Eastertide filled with loving those you find on your path.

With gratitude and peace, **Mother Jennifer**

## ASCENSION ARCHIVES

*A PIECE OF ASCENSION HISTORY...* From the November 1998 Spire

## A MOST FITTING MEMORIAL

Have you noticed the beautiful new flags hanging in our Parish Hall? Be sure to stop, look up and admire the American Flag and the Episcopal Church Flag - given in memory of a very special parishioner who passed away in September 1998 at the age of 92 - Catherine Turney - Cathy to those who knew and loved her.

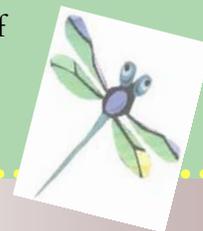
The Parish would like to thank Richard Lottridge, parishioner and close friend of Cathy, for this very special memorial which embodies Cathy's love of history and pageantry. We are all beneficiaries of Cathy's talent and her love of our Parish. Drawing upon her outstanding skills as a published author, screenwriter, and researcher, she wrote *The History of a Parish* - a comprehensive 100 year history of the Church of the Ascension from its very beginnings in 1885 through 1985, when the book was published.

The flags will be a constant reminder of the contributions Cathy made to the Church of the Ascension.

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Richard Lottridge also arranged to have the stained glass windows on the east side of Hawks Hall made and installed in honor of The Rev'd Canon Donald Roy Behm upon his retirement in 1986 as Rector of the Church of the Ascension. You might want to note that the window at the lower left includes a likeness of Driddle the Dachshund, Canon Behm's constant companion.

And - as a further note - Richard Lottridge also gave Ascension the beautifully carved wooden statue (and shelf) of Our Lady of Walsingham located on the north wall of the Chapel.



We celebrated God's victory over death through Jesus' resurrection during the Easter sunrise service and the fire did not go out. The darkness of the night was complete as I lit, for my first time, the Easter fire in the Baptismal Font. I admit to a bit of anxiety about keeping the flame going until Father Mike transferred the fire to the Paschal candle to begin dispelling the darkness. It was a wonderful service that included the guest appearance of Reverend Jennifer Beal, the annual reading of the first book of Genesis by Mandy Macintosh, and the baptisms of Corbet Wilcox and Derek Buchanan.

Holy Week also included a special retreat that included your vestry and other leadership groups. The purpose of the retreat was to continue our Strategic Planning Process. Father Mike introduced a process that he recently experienced at a retreat in New Orleans that was called Asset Based Congregational Development. The process focuses on all the assets that we already have at Ascension including the talents of our parishioners, the property and buildings on our campus, and the fund raising ability to keep the church going. We were asked to consider the things we value most at Ascension and what is the single most important event at the church that has contributed to our lives.

We will be asking all of you to participate in this strategic process and help us fulfill the best goals for the church in this coming year.

*David Mole, Senior Warden*

## Outreach Ministry



Thanks to those who contributed to the Easter basket drive for children served by the Women's Room of Friends In Deed. As I brought in our donations, the director was explaining to a client that she might not get even one Easter basket for her three children because she was signing up so late. The look on her face was heartbreaking. Thanks to your generosity, that mother was able to give her children a special Easter treat.

I've been looking for other ways our parish would enjoy working together to be the hands and feet of Christ. As I research different opportunities, it would be helpful to know the kinds of volunteer work that parishioners are already doing. Please watch for an email asking about your personal volunteer positions and favorite local charities, and take a minute to reply. If you yourself are looking for a nonprofit to contribute time to, I recommend the website [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org). It allows you to do a custom search by the type of organization (such as mentoring or environmental), the distance you're willing to travel, and your qualifications.

*Carol Rasmussen, Outreach Ministry Leader*

## BLURRED MEMORIES

Recently I encountered a photo taken a little over two years ago. A brief moment captured on film when I passed what was at the time a complete stranger. I never could have imagined that our lives would become intertwined in a completely different place only a short time later. The day that image was taken was a strange and hard day for me. I am able to vividly recall the inner turmoil that was brewing in my soul at that time. When I showed Deacon Ed the picture, he responded with his own recollection of a time he too will never forget.

Our loving God gave us the mystery of Easter forever changing humankind. There were firsthand witnesses to Jesus: the teacher, preacher, and healer. There were others who passed him on the street perhaps stopping for a moment or maybe not realizing it at all. Now there is us. We who are marked forever changed because God's love continues to manifest through the people of God here on earth.

As our Easter Alleluias resume, we embrace all that has been made new. The intricate tapestry that is the creation that we live in is such a profound part of existing. Passing a complete stranger can be a once in a lifetime occurrence or it can be the first of many exchanges. Regardless of the depth of a relationship: friend, acquaintance, or finding a "soul mate," each and every encounter with the people of God can be potential for positive transformation if we let it. Praise be to God for all those who have shared our own journey and give us the strength and courage to be of loving service to those whose journey we share.

*For Good Lyrics from the musical: Wicked*

*I've heard it said  
That people come into our lives for a reason  
Bringing something we must learn  
And we are led  
To those who help us most to grow  
If we let them  
And we help them in return  
Well, I don't know if I believe that's true  
But I know I'm who I am today  
Because I knew you*

*Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons*



## NOTES FROM THE LOFT



My April column must begin with bestowing colossal appreciation on our fabulous choir – the entire month of March was utterly spectacular! How fitting that the month culminated with the glory of Easter – thanks to all of our singers and instrumentalists who presented so much music with such great beauty; thanks to those of you who contributed to the Easter music fund, making possible an incredible festival service. Now, with the intensity of Holy

Week and the pageantry of Easter behind us, the choir is taking a well-deserved one week breather – what some churches refer to as “low Sunday” - on April 7. Worship will continue to be intentional, just a tad more low-key than in previous weeks – as, joining with the organ, we lift our voices together.

Continuing into the Easter season, on April 14 the choir will present *A Song to the Lamb* by American David Ashley White and *Love Bade Me Welcome* – a lush setting of the George Herbert text by another American composer, Roland Martin.

Good Shepherd Sunday, April 21, will feature *The Lord's My Shepherd* by Bob Chilcott, a contemporary Brit, and the popular *Shepherd Me, O God* by Minnesotan Marty Haugen.

To round out the month, on April 28 the choir will reprise Durufle's *Ubi Caritas* coupled with *Love Consecrates the Humblest Act* by American Randolph Currie.

*Debora Huffman*

**Director of Music and Organist**



## High Tea at Ascension

The Hospitality Committee will be hosting a fundraiser and Silent Auction to raise money for the Hospitality account and for the Women's Room at Friends In Deed - ECPAC.

**When:** Saturday, May 25, 2013

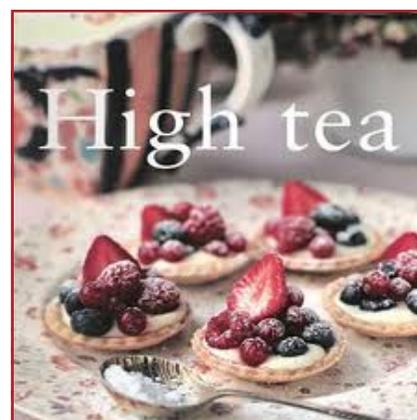
**Time:** 2:00 pm

**Where:** The Church of the Ascension  
Hawks Hall

25 East Laurel Avenue, Sierra Madre, CA

**Cost:** \$35.00 for 12 years and up

\$17.50 for 11 years and under



The Afternoon High Tea is open to the community as well as all parishioners. tickets are available in the Church office during regular business hours, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday (closed on Wednesdays). Tickets are also available at the Bottle Shop and Savor the Flavor, both stores are located on Sierra Madre Blvd. On Sundays, see Lisa Reed for tickets.

Ticket sales will be limited to 64 and must be purchased In advance. There will be no ticket sales at the door.

## Spotlight on Singers

This month's **Spotlight on Singers** focuses on mezzo-soprano **Keiko Saketani**. Keiko first attended Ascension in 2003 as a visitor from Huntsville, Alabama – a fact I knew nothing about at that time. In 2007 I received a message from Keiko – completely out of the blue - that she was moving to California and would like to sing with the Ascension choir – the kind of message that church choral directors love to receive! Keiko indeed did follow up with her intention, first singing with us for Evensong in October of that year.



Keiko doesn't actually remember the earliest time she sang – but her parents do. They tell her that at the age of three Keiko began singing with her father in the car – in Japanese, her first language. Her mother played the piano, her father the sax. Keiko has early memories of listening to big LPs of Strauss waltzes, which she loved, and something by Glenn Gould.

A Monrovia native, Keiko's first choral experience was at Clifton Junior High School's seventh and eighth grade auditioned 16-member girls chorus. At one time a violinist, Keiko served as concert master in the eighth grade and during her first year of high school. As an adult in Huntsville, Keiko sang in the Huntsville Master Chorale and the Huntsville Community Chorus. As a member of Huntsville's Church of the Nativity Choir she participated in singing Choral Evensong or programs at St. Mary the Virgin NYC, St. John's Cathedral NYC, Grace Cathedral San Francisco, National Cathedral Washington DC, St. Phillips Cathedral Atlanta, and University of the South in Sewanee, TN.

Keiko's most memorable choral experience was singing Debussy *Nocturnes iii (Sirenes)* in an eight-part women's chorus with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, along with Gustav Holst's *The Planets (VI) - Neptune, the Mystic*. Another highlight was singing with the entire Huntsville Chorus and Symphony in Joseph Haydn's *The Creation* and the Beethoven *Ninth*.

It was with the Huntsville Master Chorale that she had a wish come true moment: she sang second soprano for her absolute favorite piece - Bach's *Jesu meine Freude* - the last concert before she left for CA. Parenthetically, her first solo at Nativity Huntsville, with professionals, was the alto part in the *Jesu meine Freude* quartet *Gute Nacht, o Wesen* - an overwhelming experience.

Finally, Keiko arranged for the Nativity choir to sing at St. Paul's Chapel, which stands across from the World Trade Center in NYC – a highlight for the choir, their spouses, and their friends

Keiko's retired from the Xerox Corporation, where she was a Senior Marketing Executive. Currently she's a Spiritual Director intern with Stillpoint: Center for Christian Spirituality. She has one son, Matthew, and proudly parents Mr. Tweets, the parakeet. She enjoys walking, hiking, travel, iconography, and pastoral care. At Ascension Keiko is also a member of the Vestry and serves as a lay Eucharistic minister.

Mezzo-sopranos can sing either second soprano or first also in a choral group; at Ascension Keiko sings alto, bringing to the choir a beautiful, rich tone and tremendous musicianship. She likes singing in the choir because she enjoys giving harmonious voice to prayer and creating a sacred space in oneness through song with each other and the Divine. She refers to choir as a Great Community – how true!

*Debora Huffman*

Director of Music and Organist

## SAFE CHURCH TRAINING WORKSHOP

Led By: The Very Rev. Can. Michael Bamberger

SATURDAY, APRIL 20<sup>th</sup>

9 am – 12 pm

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.



My friends, the harshness of Lent, the grayness of uncertain spiritual journeys, the search for God's call to us, and the joy of resurrection are but a few of the things that I ponder as the scent of new life and spring fill the air during these first days of Eastertide.

But how can we celebrate resurrection if nothing has died in us? Have we suffered alongside Christ and from what have we been redeemed? If we have not walked his walk, the humble walk that faced injustice head on and died at its hands, do we deserve to celebrate new life?

Resurrection is about facing the injustices of our day and time. We must acknowledge suffering. We must honestly ask ourselves who we have sacrificed in our society...the immigrant, friends, family members, the homeless, the starving, alcohol and substance abusers, those suffering from anxiety, fear, and depression. Maybe, it's the children who cry out at night, the mentally ill, those suffering bereavement, our gay neighbor, or the person two pews over. Perhaps, ourselves.

For Christians, resurrection comes when we walk the difficult road with Jesus, when we let him transform our lives. It comes when we boldly stare injustice in the face and, no matter what the cost, we come out the other side. Easter is the other side.

Lord, help us to live with beauty and the intention to transform the grayness of our lives and the world into new and vibrant life. Grant us a new vision for your glory, a new experience of your power, a new faithfulness to your world, and a new dedication to your service. We pray that we may be a beacon of hope and love for all who encounter us and that we may be a sign of true Resurrection.

In the end, Jesus wins, justice wins, love wins. It did in the first century, and it still does today.

**Deacon Ed+**



## Attention Ascension!

All Students in 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> 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 26<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup>**

**Students will begin their fast after lunch  
on April 26<sup>th</sup>.**

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](mailto:jobiharrell@gmail.com) for more information.



## Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon

**When:**

Saturday, April 27, 2013

**Time:**

11:30 am

**Where:**

Church of the Ascension  
Hawks Hall  
25 E. Laurel Avenue  
Sierra Madre



All women of the Church are welcome, and I encourage you to bring a friend to enjoy the potluck lunch, fellowship, fun, and laughter.

Lisa Reed  
Fellowship Ministry Leader  
[lisareed4@verizon.net](mailto:lisareed4@verizon.net)

**On Sunday, April 28th, 2013,**

**following both services...**

## A DESPEDIDA FOR THE LARSON'S

Join us in Hawks Hall on Sunday, April 28th, following both services, to say farewell to John & Barbara Larson. Let's celebrate their ministry among us and wish them well on their new journey!



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](http://www.ascension-sierramadre.com)

## April/May 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Fr. Bamberger out of town-Commissioning Ministry Visits					
7 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass  <b>2pm: Funeral/Reception for Abbe Keith</b>	8	9 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	10 5:30pm Yoga <b>6pm Mass</b> 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	11 <b>7am Mass</b> 9am Forum	12	13
14 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass	15	16 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group  <b>7pm Vestry Meeting</b>	17 5:30pm Yoga <b>6pm Mass</b> 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	18 <b>7am Mass</b> 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg  <b>3pm Clericus Meeting Hawks Hall</b>	19	20 <b>Safe Church Training 9am—Noon Hawks Hall</b>  <b>2pm: Funeral/Reception for Ron Mosier</b>
21 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass	22	23 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	24 5:30pm Yoga <b>6pm Mass</b> 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	25 <b>7am Mass</b> 9am Forum  <b>DOK Meeting</b>  <b>MAY SPIRE ARTICLES DUE</b>	26	27 <b>11:30 am Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon</b>
28 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass  <b>Noon PMC Meeting</b>  <b>Despedida for Father John Larson &amp; Barbara Larson</b>	29	30 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	1 5:30pm Yoga <b>6pm Mass</b> 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	2 <b>7am Mass</b> 9am Forum	3	4 
	Father Bamberger out of town—Houston ER&D					

### 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!