



The SPIRE

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

September
2013



Upcoming Events

September 2nd -
Happy Labor Day!
Church Office Closed

September 7th -
Memorial Service/Reception for
Hal Barber at 10:00 am

On
Sunday, September 8th

Ministry
Commissioning Sunday



Ascension's
Choir is back
from their
Summer
Hiatus!

Community of Friends
Evening Service @ 5pm

September 15th -
Fall Sunday School Kickoff
Formation Ministry Sunday

September 17th -
Vestry Meeting

September 21st -
CA Coastal Clean-up Day/
Heal the Bay

September 22nd -
Parish Ministry Council Meeting
Presence Ministry Sunday

September 26th -
Daughters of the King Meet

September 29th -
Fellowship Ministry Sunday

From the Rector

For those of us in the Church, each year seems to have a whole set of starting points. Obviously, there is January's start of the calendar year. We also observe the beginning of the liturgical year on the First Sunday of Advent. At this point, we are looking to the start of our program year in the Fall. On Sunday, September 8th we celebrate and highlight the various ministries we share here at Ascension in our Celebration of Ministry. In the midst of the two services, we will highlight each of our six core ministries, reaffirm our commitments, and commission folks for specific ministries.

In some respects, these starting points are all very familiar – there is a wonderful sense of continuity at Ascension from year to year. But there is also a sense of newness in the air as well. We have a new worship service in the Community of Friends at 5 p.m. (While this service will usually happen on the first Sunday of the month, it will be on September 8th this month due to the Labor Day weekend.) We are introducing a new curriculum for Christian Formation for our young people. There are new members of our parish who are ready to join our fellowship.

I hope that in the midst of the busy-ness of this Fall, we can all take time to ask or reflect on a few questions -

- What gifts can I offer for the life of our parish?
- What gifts does God have in store for me if I open myself?
- How can this new program year be for me a time of growth?

I believe that God's Spirit is moving in our midst. I am excited about the activities of this Fall. And I am very thankful for all that everyone does in our ministry together.



Canon Bamberger

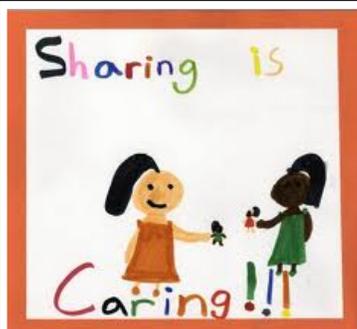
Financial Snapshot

January - August 2013

Amount Pledged:	\$172,833
Amount Received:	\$116,901
Difference:	\$55,932



Is your pledge current?



Sharing & Caring

Spiritual, psychological, and physical sufferings are all a part of the human condition. The Gospel calls us to reach out to others who are suffering and to do what it takes to make them whole. We are called to assist the suffering on their journeys from brokenness to wholeness.

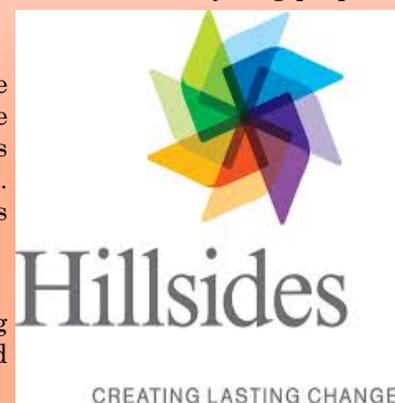
At Ascension, two of our six core values are Pastoral Care and Outreach. Often, we think of these within the context of our church community - in other words, what we do directly for each other or for our neighbors as representatives of Ascension. However, our sharing and caring doesn't end there. Many of you work tirelessly by giving your time and talent to various organizations and charities.

I'd like to invite each of you to participate in **"Project Sharing & Caring."** It's easy...tell me about how you give your time and talent and a little about the organization or charity that you're involved in. Each month in the Spire we'll give you and the organization a special shout out. Submit your story to deaconed@gmail.com. So let's get started -

Since 2010, Deacon Ed has been on the Board of Directors at Hillisides. Hillisides is a premier provider dedicated to improving the overall well-being and functioning of vulnerable children, youth, and their families. Their vision is to create lasting change in the lives of all the at-risk children and youth we serve. Hillisides provides high quality care, advocacy, and innovative services that promote safe, permanent environments where young people can thrive.

Hillisides was founded 100 years ago by a compassionate young Deaconess of the Episcopal Church, Evelyn Wile. From its inception as an orphanage until the agency's present day status as a private, nonprofit treatment center, Hillisides has never wavered from its commitment to creating a safe place for children. Therapeutic treatment, special education, family crisis intervention, and children's rights advocacy are at the heart of the agency's mission today.

On September 15, 2013, Hillisides is celebrating 100 years of Sharing and Caring for vulnerable youth and their families. For more information about Hillisides and how you can get involved visit www.hillisides.org



Blessings, Deacon Ed +



The Fellowship Ministry invites you to join us in Hawks Hall on Sunday, September 29, 2013 following both Services to see what the Fellowship Ministry is all about. Want to help with special social events, such as Easter brunches, receptions following an Evensong, sponsor or host a coffee hour? Check us out and have a bite to eat too!

There will be light refreshments following the 8:00 am Service, and lunch following the 10:15 am Service.

*Aloha,
Lisa Reed, Fellowship Ministry Leader*



ASCENSION'S GOT TALENT! STEWARDSHIP TALENT!

Stewardship is all about us - each and every one of us. Yes, monetary pledges are always welcome to keep our Church and its many programs going every year. But pledges of talent and time are just as important. Take a look at each one of our core Ministries. I am sure that one of them will call out to you as a way to use your time and talent.

Worship: We all enjoy reading the scriptures; why not become a Reader during a Sunday service? Train to become a Chalice Bearer. St. Anne's Altar Guild can always use more members (the commitment time is one Saturday a month and the weekday Services following your Saturday). How's your singing voice -- join the choir. Love to meet and greet -- become an Usher or a Greeter and welcome all at the door on Sunday mornings. Kids too can pledge their time and talent by serving as an Acolyte. Enjoy baking -- join the Bread Makers to mix and bake our Communion bread. Who doesn't love a wedding -- become a member of the Wedding Guild.

Formation: "Development in Christian faith and practice is a lifelong process." This ministry has so much to offer to adults; serve in a leadership role/teacher with our kids ages 3 years through the 12th grade. The children's programs are broken into various age groups. Or rather become a leader/teacher with other adults? Either join or become a leader in a Small Group, or maybe becoming a Daughter of the King would be something that speaks to you.

Pastoral Care: Become a Lay Eucharistic Visitor and get trained to bring Communion to those who are homebound; or write letters/notes to members of the parish who are in need, sorrow, illness, and joy.

Fellowship: Okay, even though this article is from all of the Stewardship Committee, this one is from the letter writer, and this ministry is so close to my heart. Time and talent are always needed to help provide our Sunday Coffee Hours, special social events, Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheons, the weekly Dinner Group. Our Meals Ministry provides food for the families of those needing help following surgery, illness, child birth, or a death in the family. You might want to be available to provide a meal.

Presence: Our Verger, Mike Beach, could really use your time and talent at the parish work parties. Commitment time is the first Saturday of every even month for about 3 hours. Want to become involved in the Memorial Garden? Help keep it weeded, pruned, and always welcoming to all. Become part of our "Welcome Ministry" and welcome all new comers into our Church by greeting them, inviting them into Hawks Hall for coffee hour, and providing them with the "Welcome Package."

We all have time and talent, and as you can see, there are so many ways that you can offer your gifts to our core ministries. I have been the Fellowship Leader for a number of years, and I have enjoyed all of it.

*Sincerely,
Lisa Reed and the Stewardship Committee, Wendy Stockly, Pam Harrison,
and Susan Clifton.*

**SHARE
YOUR
TALENT**

A message from the Presence Ministry...

How do we show the community our presence? We like to put our best foot forward by keeping the grounds in good shape, making our landscaping inviting, and maintaining the Memorial Garden. Many people stop at the Lynch gate every day on their way up the hill and frequently enter the Memorial Garden. This building and grounds ministry provides an opportunity for you to contribute to this activity on the first Saturday of the even numbered months. These opportunities are called work parties and Ascension could certainly use your support throughout the year for gardening, painting, and other light work. Come and join the next party on October 5 from 8:30 to noon.

The Presence Ministry also provides our website, our newsletter (The Spire), and advertising and publicity for the parish and surrounding community.

Submitted by Mike Beach, Presence Ministry Leader

Information about the Curriculums used in Sunday School at Ascension

CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD (AGES 3-9)

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is an approach to the religious formation of children rooted in the Bible, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. Children gather in an "atrium," a room specially prepared for them containing simple yet beautiful materials that they use in their worship.

You may be wondering how these materials help the religious life of children. If an adult hears a beautiful passage from the Bible, the adult might take a Bible, find the passage, and read it slowly again and again. He or she may think deeply about the words and perhaps speak to God in a thankful or hopeful prayer. But a little child, too young to read, needs another way. In an atrium, the child can ponder a biblical passage or a prayer from the liturgy by taking the material for that text and working with it - placing wood figures of sheep in the sheepfold of the Good Shepherd, setting sculpted apostles around a Last Supper table, or preparing a small altar with the furnishings used for the Eucharist. Older children who do read often copy parables from the Bible, lay in order written prayers from the rite of baptism, or label a long time line showing the history of the kingdom of God.

The word "catechesis" is often defined as oral instruction given to catechumens (those preparing for baptism). It is from a Greek word related to the word "to teach" and means "resounding" or "echoing down." It refers to the passing on of the truths of our faith. Though most of the children we serve are baptized in infancy and are not actually catechumens, their catechesis has been delayed until the earliest ages at which they can participate in learning about what it is to be a baptized person.

SENIOR YOUTH

Rather than imparting information from the outside, Confirm not Conform explores the beliefs and questions that come from the students themselves. The debate and discussion sparked by the students ignite their faith into something lively and real. CnC takes the idealism and skepticism that co-exist in young people and uses that energy to help youth become engaged with their faith and their community.



JUNIOR YOUTH

The "Mission" of Weaving God's Promises

1. To teach children and youth how God's promises of salvation are woven into our lives.
2. To teach children and youth the way of Christ, not only in the church but also in the world as Christ's ambassadors.
3. To give children and youth a solid grounding for future youth and high-school formation programs which prepare them for Christian adulthood.
4. To foster the spiritual formation and growth of our children and youth in Christ's love and mercy and to teach the spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation.



WEAVING GOD'S PROMISES

Here's a little bit of what I learned:

- The Bible is full of stories about people making really bad choices and God still loves each and every one of them.
- God's got the whole world in his (or her!) hands.
- God answers prayer.
- God will be there to meet you in a lion's den or in a fiery furnace...and giants: no biggie.
- Trying to run from God could mean that you wind up in the belly of a whale.
- Do not hit back, even when someone hits you.
- Jesus can do a whole lot with very little. (You can't believe what he can do with a sack lunch!)
- When our friends are sick, we should take them to Jesus, even if we have to lower them through the roof.

-"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world. Red, and Yellow, Black and White, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

-"Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so. Little ones to him belong. They are weak but he is strong. Yes, Jesus loves me."

-Everything is a gift, and gifts are meant to be shared.

**All I Needed to
Know I Learned
in Sunday School**
*(With sincere apologies
to Robert Fulghum)*

Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons

This month our **Spotlight on Singers** features alto **Elizabeth Levie**, and her late husband, **Rex**.



Liz was born in Decatur, Illinois and raised in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. She came to Ascension in 1971 from the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Fond du Lac and the Church of Our Savior in San Gabriel. Rex's background was Mormon, atheist, and Roman Catholic – the Catholics prevailed. In 1973 he was recognized into the Anglican Communion here at Ascension. Liz and Rex were married in 1974 and Liz's five children became their five children, who subsequently blessed them with twelve grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Aside from her life at Ascension, Arcadian resident Liz serves as a volunteer for the Sierra Madre Women's Club Wistaria Thrift Shop, sings in the Sierra Madre Chorale, and has an avid, active interest in bowling.

In 1990 Liz joined the choir as an alto after Gabriel Arregui, director of music at the time, promised it would only be for the Easter service - somehow he failed to mention which Easter he meant (for which I'm grateful . . .)! After serving on the vestry as junior warden, then head usher, from 1982-1997, Rex joined Liz in the choir, expanding the bass section. Taking part in the music of worship was a large part of the Levie's life together – a joyous service – a gift given and received. We are so grateful for Rex's service – he most definitely will be in our thoughts throughout the upcoming fall season, and we envision that Liz's involvement will continue for years to come. One can almost hear Rex say, "THANKS be to God!"

Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Many thanks to Lavette Teague, Mark Riebs, Susan Beach, Colette Ostrye, Carol Rasmussen, and Keiko Sakatani for sharing their vocal gifts with us during August – their contributions are much appreciated! Once again, may I express my deep appreciation to all of our vocalists for filling our services with the sounds of music throughout the summer!

One final Sunday of vocal chamber music: the music for **September 1** will be provided by Colette and Keiko singing works by Antonio Vivaldi and Jonathan Willcocks. On **September 8** the choir returns from summer hiatus, presenting the rhythmic *Cantate Domino* by Giuseppe Ottavio Pitoni and John Rutter's hauntingly beautiful *A Clare Benediction*.

The choir's weekly Wednesday evening rehearsals will begin on **the 11th** – at 7:30 p.m. in Hawks Hall. In this regard, let me shout out a call to all singers, particularly **altos** and **tenors** who've been sitting in the pews, to come and join us in the loft – a few additional singers will really round out the ensemble and provide consistency when some of the group may be ill or out of town. It's a fabulous group to participate in – any of our members will attest to this – and a wonderful way to both worship God and to serve him and your fellow parishioners. Do consider this as a possible personal ministry for yourself!

Choral music for the remainder of the month includes:

September 15 – *O Praise God in His Holiness* by John Weldon, Alan Bullard's *God in Mine Eternity*.

September 22 – Michael Haydn's *Praise the Lord, All Ye People* and the beloved *Ave Verum Corpus*, by Mozart.

September 29 – *Behold Now, Praise the Lord* by Everett Titcomb and *For I Am Persuaded* by Mark Schweizer. (Have you read any of the Liturgical Mysteries? Yes, this is the very same Mark Schweizer, who is a real, honest-to-goodness bonafide musician! If you're not familiar with these books, do look them up – you won't regret it.)

Finally, a date to circle on your calendars: **Sunday, October 20**, 5:00 p.m. – **Chamber Music at Ascension**, a collaboration between Church of the Ascension and Sierra Madre Music. Presenting this concert will be the award-winning AlmaNova Duo - Jessica Pierce, flute, and Almer Imamovic, classical guitar. The free event will be followed by a wine and cheese reception in Hawks Hall. Look for more information to come later – for now simply save the date – and take a sneak peak at the performers via <http://www.almanova.us>.

Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist



Formation

"Development in Christian faith and practice...a lifelong process

"...Moving towards becoming the person God calls us to be"

"...Takes place chiefly through education, study, worship, and prayer {and}...
through our mutual support of one another."



From www.ascension-sierramadre.com/wp/ministries/formation/

Adult Formation: "...Moving Towards Becoming the Person God Calls Us to Be..."

Questions:

Are you where you want to be on your path of spiritual discovery or formation?

If not, what do you think is getting in your way?

Ascension has a variety of well established opportunities for spiritual growth in addition to our rich tradition of worship. Small Group studies focusing on the bible or a topic selected by the group are generally offered on Sunday mornings, although they can actually be offered on any day and time that is most convenient for all the participants. These groups can be ongoing or meet just for a specific period of time. The Rector's Forum, offered on Thursday mornings, discusses a book or a topic of current interest. Seasonal programs dedicated to enriching our spiritual journey are presented throughout the year. Prayer groups, Tuesday Night Dinners, Women's Fellowship Luncheons, and options for outreach, service, and shared community are all opportunities to learn, love, and laugh in the name of God and Christ, His Son.

Questions:

Do the opportunities for spiritual growth at Ascension meet your needs?

If not, what does not work for you?

You are busy people. Your day-to-day is already filled to the brim with "normal" life tasks. Family, jobs, relationships, life decisions, commitments large and small, plans for the future, and taking care of the present are all part of each day. Whether you are always organized or deal with these tasks as they cross your plate, you have many, many issues that pull on your time and heart.

Questions:

How do you include time for your personal connections with God in your day?

If you find that this is difficult to do, what gets in the way?

We all have our own ways of learning about God. Sometimes reaching out to God seems easier than at other times. Sometimes there can be a spiritual hunger for connection that is almost palpable and other times, hopefully, there can be a peace that fills the heart. What does seem to be true is that we have to do our part to find the inner quiet, open our hearts, and then take the time to "listen" to what God has to say to each of us. Perhaps, the more we try to open our hearts and "listen," the more we might be able to "hear."

Question:

If you could choose other avenues of learning that might support your formation journey with God, what might they be?

Continued on next page...

We all learn and process information and experience differently. It is okay to think outside the current box and think about what might work for you. Some avenues might include:

- ◇ All at church or only partially at church
- ◇ On Sundays, occasionally on Sundays, or never on Sundays
- ◇ Varied time commitment
- ◇ Individual, group, or a combination of learning opportunities
- ◇ Computer based learning opportunities such as classes, specific discussions, topic specific websites and/or social websites
- ◇ Day-to-Day messages delivered each morning to your computer or phone
- ◇ Book club
- ◇ Varied media opportunities followed by discussion
- ◇ Plus other more creative options not listed

By September 9th, you will receive a survey designed to help assess the Adult Formation Program at Ascension. It will not take long to complete. Promise. Given that "...our mutual support of one another..." is part of the foundation of Formation at Ascension, your feedback will be especially valuable. It will also be private. No names or personally identifying information will be used in any summary.

My thanks to each of you.

Blessings, Maggie Byrne Outhouse, Formation Ministry Leader



Many thanks to everyone who donated backpacks over the summer. They were deeply appreciated.

Friends In Deed continues to suffer financially. The Bad Weather Shelter has had to reduce its services this year. For the whole winter (Thanksgiving through March 15), it will be weather activated only. When the weather forecast for the night is above 40 degrees with little chance of rain, the shelter won't open. Even more devastating for the homeless community, the shelter will not accept families this year. Because families sleep at a different site requiring transportation and additional insurance, they cost more than Friends In Deed can afford.

Ascension's veteran shelter volunteers are committed to serving the homeless population by cooking dinner when we are able. We'll be posting sign-up sheets for two or three dinners once the dates are assigned. When you sign up, you'll be on call to cook; you'll get a call or text in the afternoon of the preceding day letting you know whether the shelter will be open. We are also looking at adding an additional weekend service project for after Christmas.

Again this year, we will be participating in Crop Walk and offering Thanksgiving dinner for the Women's Room, the women's day shelter at Friends In Deed. We also continue to cook one lunch a month for the Women's Room under the leadership of Sandra Dickey. For more information on any of these activities, please contact me at carol.r@att.net.

Submitted by Carol Rasmussen, Outreach Ministry Leader



Ascension is joining the largest volunteer day on the planet!

Coastal Clean Up takes place the third Saturday of every September. Heal the Bay coordinates more than 60 beach, inland, dive and kayak cleanup sites in L.A. County for all to participate. This event is open to every member of the parish, and families and youth are encouraged to participate. If you are interested in other ways to help, we will also be in need of drivers to the beach we are assigned to. More information to come.

Contact: Jobi Harrell 626-710-3021

SAVE THE DATE

Coastal Clean Up Day

September 21, 2013

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

August 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 7:30am Morning Prayer (Rite I) 8am Mass 9am Christian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass	2 LABOR DAY 	3 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	4 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass	5 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	6	7 Memorial Service & Reception for Hal Barber 10am
8 7:30am Morning Prayer (Rite I) 8am Mass 9am Christian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Ministry Commissioning Sunday Community of Friends Service at 5pm	9	10 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	11 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	12 7am Mass 9am Forum	13	14 Stillpoint Meeting in Library 8—5
Fr. Wood out of town September 10th - September 16th						
15 7:30am Morning Prayer (Rite I) 8am Mass 9am Christian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Formation Ministry Sunday Fall Sunday School Kickoff	16	17 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group 7pm Vestry Meeting	18 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	19 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	20	21 CA Coastal Clean-up Day
Fr. Wood out of town						
22 7:30am Morning Prayer (Rite I) 8am Mass 9am Christian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Presence Ministry Sunday Noon PMC Meeting	23	24 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	25 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal OCTOBER SPIRE ARTICLES DUE	26 7am Mass 9am Forum DOK MEETING Contact Jobi Harrell for details	27	28
29 7:30am Morning Prayer (Rite I) 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass Fellowship Ministry Sunday	30	31 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group				

STAYING CONNECTED THROUGH THE WEEK



SEARCH FOR: Sierra Madre Episcopal Church of the Ascension

Connect with fellow parishioners!



CHANNEL NAME: AscensionSierraMadre (1 word)

Videos of Parish Events, Special Services, and more!