

The SPIRE

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



Upcoming Events

March 2nd -
Short Church at 5:00 pm

March 4th -
Shrove Tuesday Pancake
Supper

**March 5th -
LENT BEGINS**

Ash Wednesday ~
Mass & Imposition of Ashes
at

7am, Noon, & 6pm

March 16th-
Lenten Evensong & Reception

March 18th-
Vestry Meeting

March 22nd-
Quiet Day begins at 9:00am

March 23rd-
ER&D Sunday (more info
inside)

March 23rd-
Parish Ministry Council Mtg



**March 30th-
Bishop Visit
&
Confirmation**

The Right Reverend
Mary Douglas Glasspool

March 30th-
Daughters of the King
Investiture / 10:15 Service

March 2014

From the Rector

Towards the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer in the Proper Preface during Lent, we hear these words - "You bid your faithful people cleanse their hearts, and prepare with joy for the Paschal feast; that, fervent in prayer and in works of mercy, and renewed by your Word and Sacraments, they may come to the fullness of grace which you have prepared for those who love you." During Lent this year, this prayer could serve us well as the focus of our Lenten observance. It seems to boil down to two simple intentions - cleansing our hearts and preparing with joy.

How do we live out these intentions? In the preface, we are urged to be fervent in prayer, to do works that give life to others, and to be engaged in the liturgical life of the church. I hope that this Lent will be the time for all of us to focus on performing these three basic tasks. But whatever disciplines you may take on this year, hold them to this simple test - does it help cleanse your heart and does it draw you toward joy?

I am particularly struck by the concept of joy. Lent is sometimes thought to be gloomy and weighted with reminders of our wretchedness, but this prayer frames the season as one in which we move closer and closer to joy. It almost has that same anticipatory quality as Advent. This Lent I look forward to holding in tension the solemnity and the building joy.

Blessings, MAB+

A Journey Through Lent

Shrove Tuesday Supper

Come have your fair share of Pancakes for Supper!

When: Tuesday, March 4th, 2014

Time: 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

Where: Hawks Hall

Cost:

\$6.00 Adults, \$4.00 Children twelve and under or \$20 for a family of four or more!

(Our very own Father Michael will be the Master Pancake Flipper!)

*** All proceeds will be donated to Friends in Deed***

A message from the new Senior Warden...



My first order of business as Senior Warden is an expression of gratitude. Thank you to our Rector for giving me this opportunity to better serve Ascension and the Church. Thank you also to our new and returning Vestry members for agreeing to serve. I look forward to working with Jon Prentice, John Murphy, Ted Bosley and Jean Rowe and to knowing them better. Of course, continued service with Pam Harrison, Susan Clifton, Ross Kellock, and Kathy Calleton will be a further blessing as will be Rob Stockly's continuing role as our Treasurer. Finally thank you to outgoing Vestry members David Mole, Keiko Sakatani, and Jay Packer for their dedication and service to the parish these past years. I know we will continue to count on their wisdom and guidance still.

Last year, the Vestry identified three goals: 1.) Improving revenue streams 2.) Enhancing our relationship with the Gooden School and the families there, and 3.) Increasing parish membership and attendance at worship. We will continue our work on each of these goals. It is, however, an eternal obligation for the governing board of any organization to fret over its budget. The Vestry, no doubt, will exhibit such obligatory consternation and render the appropriate scrutiny. I hope, however, we keep in mind why we fret. A balanced budget, by itself, is not that important. It is not a goal in itself. After all, zero revenues and zero expenses is a balanced budget. A budget is, instead, a piece of information that tells us what we can do and whether we are viable as an organization (or, in this case, a corporation). Our true goals have one overarching purpose – to do good. Many of us came to Ascension because it is a place that welcomes all, comforts those in need, and inspires us to be better and grow through God's love and grace. A balanced budget may well further those purposes, but I suspect few of us examined the Parish's balance sheet before deciding to make it our spiritual home. So, for me, I look forward to my new role (and all the required reading) because it gives me another way to do a bit of good. There is great comfort knowing I am not alone.

John Buchanan, Senior Warden

SURPRISED BY GOD

There have been times in my life when things seemed just fine and everything was going as planned. The universe, God, and I were all on the same page. Simply put, I couldn't ask for more – or so I thought. I am reminded constantly that it may be a mistake to believe that there is nothing within that is in need of radical change and new direction.

During the 1980's after my self-imposed exile from organized religion, I embraced the Episcopal Church. I realize now that the experience of conversion is not limited to moving from one faith stance in life to another. That is the external understanding of being a convert. In a very real sense we are all converts because we are all called to change.

During our lifetimes, events occur which may cause us either pain or pleasure. At first we don't always understand why they are happening or the significance they hold for us. Sometimes meeting another person can determine our destiny, an event that may seem insignificant to others, but not to us. Often it is only later that we discern Christ's presence - God's hand in it. That realization is our reward for having believed while we did not see. Such experiences can shape our passage to a greater relationship with God.

The season of Lent is a perfect opportunity to discern if and how you are being called to change. Ask yourself when have you been surprised by God? What were the experiences of life that invited you to think and respond in new ways? Are any of those same kinds of events and experiences at work in your life today? Are you being called to something more?

The following quote from Thomas Merton may help you along the way:

“You do not need to know precisely what is happening, or exactly where it is all going. What you need is to recognize the possibilities and challenges offered by the present moment and to embrace them with courage, faith and hope.”

Blessings on your Lenten Journey, Deacon Ed

(The following article was published in The Verger's Voice)

The Verger's Voice

Tuesday, December 17, 2013

Kasey and Her Muse

by Ken Holloway ken@vergers.org



I had seen Michael Beach during the **Verger's Guild Annual Conference** in Nashville this year, but did not actually meet him until we were seated close-by at the airport waiting for our flights home.

He told me that he has been a member of the **Episcopal Church of the Ascension** in Sierra Madre, California for twenty-six years and that he sings in the choir most Sundays, so he is not verging as much these days. We talked a bit about our experience in the aerospace industry. During our conversation, I asked him to let me know if he had any ideas for **Verger's Voice** articles. I had asked at least fifty others to send me ideas, drafts, photographs or manuscripts, mentioning it conversationally.

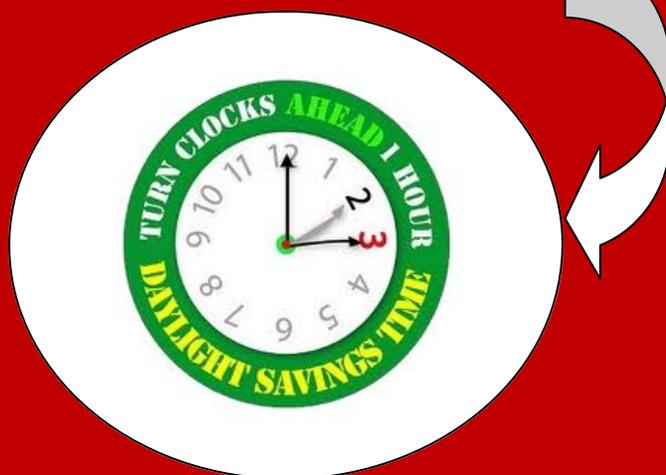
Michael replied. The image he sent and the story behind it moved this 70+ author.

Kasey O'Sullivan and her grandmother came to the Episcopal Church of the Ascension in Sierra Madre CA. about three years ago. Kasey, then a 7 year-old, has been an acolyte for the last two years. She is acquiring liturgical wisdom in this picture from Head Verger Michael Beach. This picture was made by Dr. Jay Packer, a member of the parish. Dr. Packer is behind the camera at Ascension often. He approached Michael and Kasey's grandmother with the concept and made this one with their approval.

We can read into this picture as we are guided by our individual reference frames.

I see teaching, guiding and loving care in a liturgical setting. How about you?

DON'T FORGET!
SUNDAY, MARCH 9TH



The 30 Hour Famine, originally scheduled for February 21st & 22nd has been rescheduled for April 18th (*Good Friday*) - April 19th (*Holy Saturday*).

Join us for...

ER&D Sunday March 23rd, 2014

Katie Mears, Program Manager for USA Disaster Preparedness and Response for Episcopal Relief & Development will be preaching. She will be available to answer questions after both services. Welcome Katie!



The ER&D Team:

Left to right, Katie Mears, Deacon Elaine Clements, Deacon Russ Oeschell, Father Bamberger, and Dave Baylor.

Lent for Families

Life sure doesn't stop during Lent. It relentlessly marches on with homework, sports, after-school activities, and social gatherings. At the beginning of each Lenten week families have to choose what to do, and what to forgo. In this, there are two potential outcomes: to try to make each church service and live as if nothing else is happening, or to avoid attempting extra Lenten efforts. After all, Lenten disciplines are out of step with the rest of the world. As always, we need to strive for balance.

A Few Suggestions on Ways for Families to Observe Lent:

- * Do pick one service a week to go to—but work around family member schedules.
- * Find a church task during Lent and Holy Week for the kids to help with—church preparation, egg stuffing and dying, serving as an acolyte at a service.
- * Talk about it!
- * Pick an alms project.
- * Create a Lenten Calendar! At Shrove Tuesday supper, we will host this activity with suggestions of one simple way to keep Lent each of the 40 days.
- * Unplug your life—turn off the TV. Unhook cable. Hide the video games, get out into God's world by taking nature walks.

Submitted by Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Our March music reflects the transition from Epiphany into Lent. The last Sunday after Epiphany, March 2, includes our final “Alleluias” until Easter, with Craig Phillips’ (of Beverly Hills All Saints, b. 1961) powerful “Transfiguration” coupled with “Alleluia, Song of Gladness,” by Henry Purcell (c. 1659-1695).

Our Lenten music, beginning on March 9, will feature “Hide Not Thy Face” by Richard Farrant (c. 1525-1580) and Mozart’s (1756-1791) “We Adore Thee, Christ our Lord,” arranged by Thomas Hoekstra (college classmate – mine, not Mozart’s . . .).

The 16th will be a day of magnificent music! In the morning we’ll hear “For God So Loved the World,” another opus of Craig Phillips, and a lovely setting of Psalm 121, “I Lift My Eyes,” by Michael Baughen (b. 1930) and Elizabeth Crocker (contemporary). Mark your calendars, because you’ll definitely want to return for

CHORAL EVENSONG FOR LENT

5:00 P.M.

This beautiful candlelit service of music and meditation will incorporate selections from the Renaissance throughout the present day, specifically:

O For A Closer Walk - Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924)
 Preces and Responses - Richard Shephard (b. 1949)
 Phos Hilaron (O Gracious Light) - Roland E. Martin (b. 1955)
 Dorian Service: Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis - Thomas Tallis (c. 1505-1585)
 Greater Love Hath No Man - John Ireland (1879-1962)
 Evening Prayer - Roland E. Martin (b. 1955)
 Like As the Hart Desireth the Waterbrooks - Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

Two organ chorale settings of “Herzlich tut mich verlangen” by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) will begin and conclude the service. All are invited to a reception in Hawks Hall following the service.

On March 23, Felix Mendelssohn’s (1809-1847) lovely “Lord, Bow Thine Ear” will be coupled with “Lamb of God,” by Samuel Webbe (1740-1816).

And the month concludes with the Bishop’s visit on the 30th, which will feature John Rutter’s (b. 1945) beloved “The Lord Is My Shepherd,” accompanied by oboist Sean Dougall, and the hauntingly beautiful “Surely He Hath Borne Our Grievs” by Antonio Lotti (1667-1740).

As I review this synopsis of our March music, I find myself genuinely anticipating celebrating these works with you – I can’t think of any more moving or appropriate selections for this period of worship. I trust that, as the month ends, you’ll concur.

*O God, whom Saints and angels delight to worship in heaven:
 Be with us, we beseech thee, as we seek to perfect the praises of thy children on earth;
 and grant to us even now such glimpses of thy beauty
 that we may be made worthy at length to behold it unveiled for evermore;
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
 ~ The Royal School of Church Music*



Debora Huffman

Director of Music and Organist



Save the Date

Saturday May 17, 2014
2:00 pm

2nd annual Afternoon Tea fund raiser

This fund raiser supports the many events that the Hospitality Committee provides, and a portion of the proceeds will again be donated to the Women's Room of Friends In-Deed.

As at last year's tea there will be a silent auction...look forward to hearing about these items in future advertisements.

This year's tea theme is a "Black and White Afternoon Tea". Ticket sales will begin in the middle of April and you will be able to purchase your ticket from either myself, the Church office or Savor the Flavor located in Kersting Court. Cost per ticket: \$35

Last year's tea was a fun and successful event, and I am sure that this year will be just as grand.

Cheerio,
Lisa



Lenten

Quiet Day

Saturday, March 22nd

9am—Noon

**Church of the
Ascension**

**Led by
Father Bamberger**

Financial Snapshot

January - February 2014

Amt Pledged: \$198,428

Amt Received: \$25,689

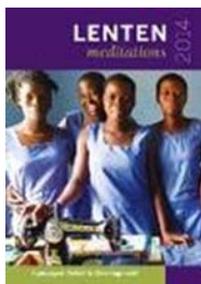
Difference: \$172,739



PICS FROM OUR PARISH WORK PARTY ON FEBRUARY 1ST
THE NEXT PARTY IS APRIL 5TH



A FEW ONLINE RESOURCES FOR YOUR LENTEN JOURNEY OF REFLECTION AND REPLENISHMENT...

**Episcopal Relief and Development Lenten Devotional**

www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/church-campaigns/lent

"...[T]his year's devotional focuses on creating economic opportunities and strengthening communities, with a particular focus on empowering women. The daily readings are co-authored by a group of leaders from across the Anglican Communion, who bring a range of perspectives as they reflect on Scripture and other sources of spiritual wisdom. You can also sign up to receive their meditations via email each day."¹

Please go to the [above listed website](#) to sign up for the free daily email.

Journey to the Cross

<http://d365.org/>

Each step of **Pause, Listen, Think, Pray, Go** is focused on your faith journey with Christ. "The d365 daily devotional site includes seasonal devotional series like Following the Star and Journey to the Cross to help readers journey through Advent and Lent. These series are written especially for students and seek to provide reflections on themes that impact our faith journey."¹ The music provides a soft background for your thoughts. There is no charge for this daily email.

**Lenten Meditations 2014**

www.stdavidschurch.org/education/lenen-devotions



Developed by St. David's Episcopal Church, Radnor, Pennsylvania

You can access a copy of the Lenten Meditations 2014 online and refer to it daily without charge.

2014 Lenten Carbon Fast

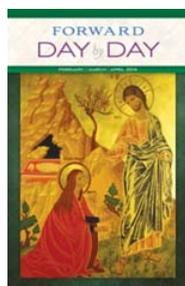
www.macucc.org/pages/detail/2410. (and, Yes, it is 2410)

Beginning Ash Wednesday and throughout Lent, participants will receive a daily email with the day's suggested carbon-reducing activity.

There is no charge for the daily email.

**Forward Day By Day**

www.forwardmovement.org/Subscriptions.aspx



Forward Day by Day is a booklet of daily inspirational meditations reflecting on a specific Bible passage, chosen from the daily lectionary readings as listed in the Revised Common Lectionary or the Daily Office from the Episcopal Church's *Book of Common Prayer*.

We have this available at the church for a \$2.00 donation.

E-mail Subscription (English Only) --\$10.00 for one year

¹ Kelly, Shannon, "Lenten Resources", www.episcopalrelief.org, February 26, 2014

Maggie Byrne Outhouse

Formation Ministry

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 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
<p>2 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass</p> <p>Short Church ~ 5pm</p>	3	<p>4 11am Prayer in the Chapel</p> <p>Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper</p>	<p>5 ASH WEDNESDAY</p> <p>Services: 7am, Noon, & 6pm</p> <p>5:30pm Yoga 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>6 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg</p>	7	8
<p>9 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass</p> <p>DAYLIGHT SAVINGS!</p>	10	<p>11 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group</p>	<p>12 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>13 7am Mass 9am Forum</p>	14	<p>15 Stillpoint Meeting 8-3 Library</p>
<p>16 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass</p> <p>Lenten Evensong & Reception ~ 5pm</p>	<p>17</p>  <p>St. Patrick's Day</p>	<p>18 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group</p> <p>7pm Vestry Meeting</p>	<p>19 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>20 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg</p>	21	<p>22 Quiet Day Begins at 9am</p>
<p>23 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass</p> <p>PMC Mtg ~ Noon ER&D Sunday</p>	24	<p>25 11am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group</p> <p>APRIL SPIRE ARTICLES DUE</p>	<p>26 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>27 7am Mass 9am Forum</p>	28	29
<p>30 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass</p> <p>Bishop Visit & Confirmation</p>	31					