



The SPIRE

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

Upcoming Events

September 1st-
Labor Day—Office Closed

September 5th-
LA Episcopal Dodger Night

September 6th-
Youth Sleepover

September 2014

From the Rector

When it comes to earthquakes in California, we often say it's not a matter of if, but when. The recent earthquake in Napa is a reminder of this. It so happens that September is Earthquake Preparedness Month. How prepared is your household? There are some basics to remind ourselves about, and perhaps update. Do you have a contact person identified who lives some distance from you that you can get a hold of and who can pass on information to others? Do you have this person's phone number memorized? (Lots of us rely on our phones to have the numbers – but batteries do run out!) Do you have a way to get accurate information? Do you have a kit and emergency supplies?

On the table going into Hawks Hall is an information sheet for Individual and Family Preparedness. This information can also be found on the Episcopal Relief and Development website under Resources. Still more information can be found at www.ready.gov.

Finally, take five or ten minutes this month, perhaps at the dinner table or at work, and play the "what if game." Talk through what you could do in the event of a disaster. Make it fun – try the scenario in which your neighborhood has been invaded by zombies.

How and with whom would you communicate? What would you eat? How would you keep safe until the cavalry arrives?

Remember Ezekiel 38:7 – "Be ready and keep ready, you and all the people that are assembled around you, and hold yourselves in reserve for them."

MAB+



Sunday, September 7th

FALL KICK-OFF

CHOIR
SUNDAY SCHOOL
SMALL GROUPS
RESUME

FOOD! FELLOWSHIP! FUN!



SPOTLIGHT ON
YOUTH TALENT SHOW

September 14th-
2015 Stewardship Drive Begins

September 16th-
Vestry Meeting

September 20th-
Heal the Bay

September 21st-
Acolyte Training

September 28th-
Parish Ministry Council Mtg

Pledge Payment Snapshot

January - August 31st, 2014

2014 Budget Amount:
\$200,000

YTD Budget: \$119,201

YTD Actual: \$125,408

Saturday, September 6th

YOUTH LOCK-IN



All incoming junior and senior youth are invited to a sleep over! It will be similar to the 30 Hour Famine sleep over, but with FOOD! We will share fellowship as well as assist with final preparations for our fall kick off celebration!

Please arrive by 7 PM.

Contact Jobi Harrell or the church office to sign up.

ASCENSION AS A PLACE OF COMMUNITY: WHAT DOES "COMMUNITY" MEAN TO YOU

I currently subscribe to a number of websites and blogs that focus on formation within not only the Episcopal Church, but also other predominantly Christian churches as well. Episcopal Lifelong Formation is one of those websites. I am always interested in finding out where others are on their path of Christian formation, what questions are being asked, and what directions are being explored. Formation is a path of discovery that covers a lifetime, but takes place one day at a time.

The following presentation, submitted by blogger Cindy Spencer on August 26, 2014, seems simple in its content. But, for me, the questions she posed triggered much thought about Ascension as a "community." What does Ascension as a "community" mean to each of us? What do we invest in? What do we receive? How do we value it? Where do we go from here?



Where and How Do You Experience Community?

by [Lifelong Formation](#)

Today's guest blogger is Cindy Spencer, Faith Formation Hub: Children and Family Ministries, [Episcopal Diocese of Olympia](#). She also serves on the Lifelong Formation Advisory Council.

The Church as a Place of Community

Earlier this year, my city celebrated its first ever Superbowl win, with a parade in below freezing weather with more people assembled on the streets of downtown than live within the city limits. It was a wonderful day, from the people picking up others waiting at bus stops when the busses were too full to stop, to the friendliness of strangers in our usually-reserved northern city.

It made me think a lot about community:

***What is community?**

***Why does it matter?**

***Why do we seek it out?**

***Where do we find it?**

I'm sure you won't be surprised that it turned me to thinking about church.

Probably the number one thing I hear about church from people has to do with the desire to be in community, to be part of something bigger than ourselves. In our faith communities we find this in two ways - through communion with God, and through communion with each other. Together we can do things we can't do alone. We can even believe things we can't believe alone. In community we can see the needs of others, and we experience shared responsibility for each other. There is a synergy of being, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

I want my children to experience this type of community, a community which simultaneously supports them and requires something of them - a community which helps call them into the full person that they are in the process of becoming. Not so they can be great, but so that the community can be whole.

In his book, *Vulnerable Communion*, the theologian Thomas Reynolds states that belonging means that we're missed when we're absent. He doesn't [just] mean that we fondly wish someone was with us. He means that we are not whole, that the community is not all it could and should be, when our individual gifts and foibles are not present. . . .

Community is not always easy. In fact, it is OFTEN not easy. It requires showing up and being present, sometimes when I'd rather be doing something else. It means doing some things the way others have decided that we'll do them rather than the way I prefer or find most natural. At times I feel like I'd rather be a hermit. And yet, I don't function that way well for long. I need God, and I need others, in part because in community I often am reminded that my understanding of God is too small.

Where and how do you experience community at your church? How do you invite your children into this community? How do you know when you've experienced it?

[Lifelong Formation](#) | August 26, 2014 at 1:41 pm | Tags: [episcopal](#), [episcopal church](#), [episcopal ministry](#) | Categories: [Latest Post](#) | URL: <http://wp.me/p2MKnz-IF>

Continued on next page...

After reading Ms. Spencer's article, several thoughts rang especially true for me.

"Together we can do things we can't do alone. We can even believe things we can't believe alone. In community we can see the needs of others, and we experience shared responsibility for each other. There is a synergy of being, where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts."

On September 7th, known as "Kick-off Sunday," Ascension begins its new fall schedule. We get started, not with a whimper, but a joyous musical bang brought to us by our own talented Ascension kids as well as our returning choir with Dr. Deb. Church School begins a new year filled with opportunities designed to help our kids learn more about God and the way He moves within our lives. Programs, both new and old, guide us on our formation path as well as provide opportunities to help us give to others who live with greater needs. Plans to enhance the look and the comfort of our church are in place. Perhaps most importantly, we have our Worship, our shared link with God. Worship at Ascension now takes place not only inside our church or by our fountain, but also in our homes. We have a variety of avenues from which to explore the paths we walk with God.

There is a richness of opportunity at Ascension for involvement as an individual as well as within a group. Our programs, our people, our fellowship, our awareness of each other and what we each bring to the table are part of the Ascension community. Every one of us contributes something, and each of us makes a difference to the whole of our community.

But regardless of what we currently identify as our Ascension community, is it all that we want it to be? The questions still remain for each of us to ask:

***What does Ascension as a "community" mean to you?**

***How do you invest in this community?**

***What do you receive from it?**

***What do you value within this community?**

***Where do we go from here?**

Blessings to each of you and to our Ascension community.

Maggie Byrne Outhouse

Formation Ministry Leader

What is Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation?



Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) emerged from the front yard lemonade stand of cancer patient Alexandra "Alex" Scott (1996-2004). At the age of 4, Alex announced that she wanted to hold a lemonade stand to raise money to help find a cure for all children with cancer. Since Alex held that first stand, the Foundation bearing her name has evolved into a national fundraising movement, complete with thousands of volunteers across the country carrying on her legacy of hope. To date, Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, a registered 501(c)3 charity, has raised more than \$80 million toward fulfilling Alex's dream of finding a cure, funding over 450 research projects nationally.

Who was Alex?

Alex is the inspiration behind Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation. Alexandra "Alex" Scott (1996-2004) was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma, a rare form of childhood cancer, before her first birthday. At the age of 4, Alex announced that she wanted to hold a lemonade stand to raise money to help find a cure for all children with cancer.

Where does the money go?

All funds raised go directly to Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation for Childhood Cancer Research, a registered 501c3 charity. Careful distribution of our grants allows doctors to bring the latest and most promising life-saving treatments to seriously ill children. These grants provide hope for childhood cancer patients. Visit our Where the Money Goes section to learn more about how your donation helps.

What is Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation's mission?

To raise money and awareness of childhood cancer causes, primarily research into new treatments and cures. To encourage and empower others, especially children, to raise money for childhood cancer by holding their own Alex's Lemonade Stands.

What is Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation's Vision?

We share the vision of our founder and creator, Alexandra "Alex" Scott – a cure for all children with cancer.

Submitted by Jobi Harrell, Minister to Younger Persons



OUTREACH EVENTS	DATE	TIME
HEAL THE BAY	9.20.2014	8 am - 12 pm
PASADENA AREA CROP WALK	11.3.2014	1 pm
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY	TBD	TBD
WOMEN'S ROOM	11.23.2014	12 pm - 2 pm
ANGEL TREE	11.16.2014	12.21.2014
BAD WEATHER SHELTER	TBD	TBD

CHURCH EVENTS	DATE	TIME
BEACH PARTY/SLEEPOVER	9.6.2014	7 pm
SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS	9.7.2014	9 am
HALLOWEEN PARTY	10.26.2014	11:30 am - 1 pm
ADVENT WREATHS	11.30.2014	9 am
TREE TRIMING PARTY	12.21.2014	11:30 am - 1 pm



Don't Be Left Behind

I've always thought of September as the beginning of a new year. School starts, the new program year at Ascension gets underway, autumn is just around the corner and new opportunities arise for each of us to be of service.

I love being of service, and most of my career has been focused on reaching out to and helping others. Within the context of the "Christian community," we refer to this service as pastoral care. Pastoral care is a term applied when people offer help and caring to others in their church or wider community. Pastoral care in this sense can be applied to listening, supporting, encouraging, and befriending.

By committing ourselves to meet regularly together, Christians become aware of those who are not gathering together—those who are absent. This is how the community develops the practice of pastoral care and evangelism, the skill of memory for those missing, the virtue of love for the lost, and the notion of the communion of saints.

I invite you to join the Ascension Care Team. I challenge each of you to adopt an individual or family in the congregation as your care buddy! It's as easy as saying hello on Sunday and inquiring about their week. If you notice that your buddy isn't in church on Sunday, give them a call and check-in. And every now and again a quick phone call just to say hello "I'm thinking about you today." Jesus likes it when we move outside of our comfort zones and what better way than to adopt, not our best friend, but someone we hardly know. We could all use a new friend or two.

Sunday, September 7th, we begin our Kick-off for the 2014-2015 program year at Ascension. What a great opportunity to adopt and be adopted when so many of us will be gathered together. On Sunday, September 28th, we'll talk more about this exciting ministry during my sermon and share our ideas on reinventing ourselves as leaders in pastoral care, evangelism, and just plain old caring.

*Live well, live blessed,
Deacon Ed+*

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Come September, the choir returns to the loft! I write with tremendous appreciation to our choristers for their individual and chamber contributions throughout the summer and with great anticipation for their combined efforts this fall ~

I write also in the hope of identifying a few good singers to join our ranks – we especially need altos and tenors. Whatever your vocal type, please give serious thought and prayer to the possibility of becoming an Ascension chorister.

Recently I came across an article in which the author, Cynthia A. Boyd, stated her reasons for singing in her church choir, paraphrased as follows:

- ◇ Singing in the church choir gives me an opportunity to express my love for the Lord.
- ◇ Singing in the church choir is more than a hobby or an activity – it's a calling.
- ◇ Singing in the church choir allows for a type of expression of praise to God that can't be accomplished in any other way.
- ◇ Singing in the church choir allows me to participate in the overall ministry of leading in worship, which is a joy and a privilege.
- ◇ Singing in the church choir has implanted incredibly profound messages within my heart and soul through the lyrics of the songs that I have been able to sing.
- ◇ Singing in the church choir has allowed me to get to know many wonderful people who have a heart of service.
- ◇ Singing in the church choir allows me to participate in something so much bigger than myself.
- ◇ Singing praise to God is the closest thing to heaven that I can experience on this earth.
- ◇ I love to sing in the church choir because of the incredible music that God has inspired men and women to compose, which then becomes part of my own spiritual journey.

Do consider making the Ascension choir part of your spiritual service – I guarantee that you'll enrich your being as well as the lives of your fellow parishioners. The choir will resume singing at the 10:15 service on September 7, with rehearsals at 9:10 on Sunday morning. Wednesday evening rehearsals will begin on September 17.

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! Awake, my soul! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn! I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the peoples, I will sing praises to You among the nations. For Your steadfast love is great above the heavens, your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let Your glory be over all the earth."

Psalm 108:1 – 5

 **Debora Huffman**
Director of Music and Organist

Save the Date!
Saturday,
September 20th



Saturday, August 2nd

Look who we found hard at work!



Avery Cox and Tom Duffy



Mike Beach and Tim Hayden



Cameron Cox



David Mole

The front porch floor boards and the entry stairs masonry of the Parish house had a group of fine fellows applying a little TLC with a very nice result. Least we forget our Mr. Beach organized this and more for a fun work party.

Tim Hayden



St. Anne's Altar Guild
1st Sunday Team

- Lynne Holl
- Dorothy Steeves
- Karen Mooradian
- Beverly Clifton
- Jessica Meehan

House Church

Thursday,
August 14th



FALL KICK-OFF

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH

Schedule of Events

8:00 Service:

New Member Baptism

9:00 am:

Sunday School & Small Groups Resume

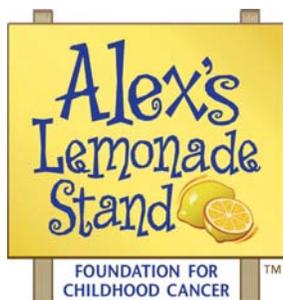
10:15 Service:

**Ascension's Choir Returns!
Commissioning of Ministries**

Following the 10:15 Service:



All **CHILDREN** and **YOUTH** are invited to share their talents at our Fall Kick Off Party after the 10:15 am service. A riddle, musical selection, dancing – we would love to see you perform! *Contact Jobi Harrell or the church office to sign up.*



OUTREACH OPPORTUNITY

Drop your loose change in the donation basket by the lemonade cooler – the money collected will be sent to Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation (previously known as Alex's Lemonade Stand and currently abbreviated as ALSF) an American pediatric cancer charity founded by Alexandra "Alex" Scott.

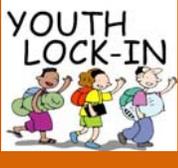
FOOD!
FELLOWSHIP!
FUN!



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

September 2014

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Parish Office Closed 	2	3 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass	4 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	5 LA Episcopal Dodger Night	6 Youth Sleepover 
7 8am Mass 9am Summer Sunday School 10:15am Mass FALL KICK-OFF JOIN US FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE 2014-2015 PROGRAM YEAR	8	9 10am Prayer in the Chapel	10 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass	11 7am Mass 9am Forum	12	13
14 8am Mass 9am Summer Sunday School 10:15am Mass 2015 STEWARDSHIP DRIVE BEGINS	15	16 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group 7pm Vestry Meeting	17 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass Choir Rehearsal	18 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	19	20 Heal the Bay 
21 8am Mass 9am Summer Sunday School 10:15am Mass ACOLYTE TRAINING 9AM	22	23 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	24 5:30pm Yoga 6pm Mass Choir Rehearsal	25 7am Mass 9am Forum OCTOBER SPIRE ARTICLES DUE	26	27
28 8am Mass 9am Summer Sunday School 10:15am Mass PMC MEETING NOON	29	30 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group				