



The SPIRE

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

JUNE 2015



Upcoming Events

June 1st – 7pm/Library
EfM Meeting

June 4th – 10:30am
Memorial Service for Esler Johnson

June 7th –
Recognition of 2015 Graduates

June 9th – 7pm/Library
EfM Meeting

June 13th –
◇ 9am -Vestry Planning Meeting
◇ 8:30am -Parish Work Party

June 16th – 7pm/Hawks Hall
Vestry Meeting

June 18th - 6:30pm
House Church/Dinner
contact parish office for location

June 20th – 11:00am/Hawks Hall
Women's Fellowship Potluck
Luncheon

June 21st – Happy Father's Day!

June 28th – Noon/Library
Parish Ministry Council Meeting

From the Rector

In a few weeks, Debbie and I will drive to Salt Lake City where I have the honor of representing the Diocese of Los Angeles as a Deputy at the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church. There are four clergy deputies and four lay deputies from LA. The Convention begins on June 24th, and there are preliminary meeting the day before. The Convention will address a variety of topics – restructuring Church governance, changes in the canons (and in particular some of the canons pertaining to marriage), congregational sustainability, theological education, and Christian formation – to name a few! A lot of the time is split between committee hearings and legislative sessions. One of the highlights of the time will be the election and confirmation of a new Presiding Bishop. As a first time deputy, I am not assigned to any committees, so I will have time to explore. Another element of Convention I am looking forward to is reconnecting with friends and colleagues from around the Church, Debbie and I will be attending several parties and reunions. There is also a huge exhibit hall with vendors, groups, and “lobbyists” all offering a great venue to schmooze. Debbie will be volunteering with hospitality at the Episcopal Relief and Development exhibit. Convention draws to a close on July 3rd, and Debbie and I will meander home through several of the National Parks in southern Utah. I ask your prayers for me, for our Church, and the world we seek to serve.

TIDBITS about



MAB+



2015 Graduate Names

If you have not already submitted names of family members and friends who will be graduating this year, please add them to the list posted on Hawks Hall bulletin board (or contact the Parish office).
Graduates will be recognized on Sunday, June 7th.

Sunday School all Summer Long!

9 am – 9:55 am – All Ages in the Parish House
10:15 am – Sunday School in the Atrium

Pledge Payment Snapshot

January - May 31st, 2015



2015 Budget Amount: \$235,000
YTD Budget: \$127,501
YTD Actual: \$112,552



In Loving Memory

Esler H Johnson DDS
July 16, 1930— May 15, 2015

A Memorial Service will be held here at Church of the Ascension on Thursday, June 4th at 10:30am. The service will be followed by a reception in Hawks Hall. Both gatherings are public.

HOUSE CHURCH

Thursday, June 18th at 6:30pm.

Location: Contact the parish office.

Followed by a Light Supper

****Sign-up sheet on Hawks Hall bulletin board****



Update

On May 16, the Vestry convened at the Gooden School to begin a strategic planning process. We took stock of our parish assets and enjoyed a robust discussion of how we could best use those assets to make an already strong parish an even better expression of faith and service – for the rest of this year and beyond. As mentioned, our approach was to focus on Ascension’s significant assets rather than dwelling on things to worry about. Many strengths were identified such as an active and devoted congregation and clergy as reflected in multiple thriving ministries, a beautiful and historic house of worship, a collection of other real property assets, and moving worship services to name a few. Building on these and other assets the vestry identified four achievable goals for the future.

They are :

- 1.) Establish a signature program for which the parish is known in the broader community (*a youth choir was a popular idea among Vestry members*)
- 2.) Enhance our formation for Christian discipleship
- 3.) Incorporate youth more fully into parish and Christian life
- 4.) Grow the use of our facilities

Multiple possible objectives were suggested as near term steps to meet these longer-term goals. First, however, we need your thoughts, and not just a survey of opinions, but your thinking on Ascension’s future and the goals identified. Vestry members will be asking for your ideas but do not hesitate to approach me, Junior Warden Ted Bosley, the Rector, or any other Vestry member to give us your thoughts and ideas. Meanwhile, for reference you can find the results of our planning session written, not in stone, but on butcher paper resting on a stand in Hawks Hall. I and the other Vestry members look forward to hearing from you.

John Buchanan, Senior Warden

There will be an information meeting for those interested in EfM on Monday June 1 and another one on Tuesday June 9 for those who can’t come on Monday. Both will start at 7:00 pm and should not last more than an hour.

EfM is a four year course of study to prepare you for an Educated Ministry, whatever that should be. EfM is not oriented toward a specific ministry but is aimed at providing you with an education and way of thinking theologically. It will help to clarify what and how you think about your Christianity and how you may want it practiced. The course will explore the Old and New Testaments and church history. It will help you develop and express your own theology.

For more information, please contact the Verger, Mike Beach.



Awesome & Magical...

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." (John 16:12)

Indulge me while I share some additional thoughts based on my Pentecost sermon.

Yes, we get overwhelmed with life and yes, we ask too many questions of God. It's unfortunate because much gets lost among the distractions and noise of our daily lives. And lest we forget, at times we are waiting for answers that may not come or that may not be what we want to hear. We just don't seem to be able to sit, do nothing, and listen. We can't hear the Spirit of Truth if we're not listening.

About doing nothing – here's some wonderful wisdom from Dorothy Day, the founder of the Catholic Worker:

"It is so hard to sit and do nothing. And yet in many a case that is all one can do. Just listen. And do nothing."



One of my favorite prayers is on page 461 of The Book of Common Prayer – prayer for the start of the day:

"This is another day, O Lord. I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be. If I am to stand up, help me to stand bravely. If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly. If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently. And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly. Make these words more than words, and give me the Spirit of Jesus. Amen."

Young Master Francis, the Gooden School first grader, is on to something when describing God as awesome and magical. He hasn't forgotten what the rest of us are trying to remember.

Live well, live blessed, Deacon Ed +



STEWARDSHIP THEME CONTEST 2016

It's that time of year again. Do you have a great idea for a 2016 Stewardship theme? If so, please submit your entry in writing to the parish office by Sunday, June 14th.

Email: parish@ascension-sierramadre.com

The winner will be announced in next month's Spire and it's creator will receive a \$20 Starbucks gift card!

LOOKING FOR HOMES!

We need homes for our July and August House Church.
Is your home available?

Contact Father Michael to discuss the details.

Thank You.



NOTES FROM THE LOFT

The choir year is now behind us – choristers, please accept our deep gratitude for your service throughout the year and enjoy a well-deserved hiatus. I know the congregation will appreciate your presence in the pews – hopefully the hymns will enthusiastically waft up to me in the loft!

During the summer months, service music will be provided by the organ, soloists, and chamber groups. I'm pleased to be representing Ascension at the annual conference of the Association of Anglican Musicians where I eagerly anticipate reuniting with Episcopal colleagues, recharging my spirits, and always gaining new insights into worship and the arts. I'll be at the conference in Tampa on Sunday, June 14 and will be on vacation Sunday, June 21. Once again Geraldine Keeling will be filling in for me – and, yes, she's planning on bringing LA Philharmonic violinist Paul Stein with her one of the two Sundays.

*When in our music God is glorified and adoration leaves no room for pride,
It is as though the whole creation cried Alleluia!
Let every instrument be tuned for praise! Let all rejoice who have a voice to raise!
And may God give us faith to sing always Alleluia!
-Fred Pratt Green*



Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

Looking for a way to celebrate a milestone birthday, a special anniversary, a child's birthday, or another special occasion?

Consider hosting a Coffee Hour after one of the Sunday services. There are (2) options:

Host a Coffee Hour:

1. Sign up on the bulletin board in Hawks Hall
2. Bring snacks for 50-75 people to the kitchen on your chosen Sunday morning (be sure to indicate which Coffee Hour they are to be used for)
3. A member of the Hospitality Committee will help you set up your table and assist you in putting your treats out.

Sponsor a Coffee Hour:

1. Contact Lisa Wagner-Reed, Fellowship/Hospitality Ministry Leader, after a Sunday Service to give your sponsorship (**recommended donation is \$35**). If you don't see her in church, you can e-mail her at reed_lisa@laco.edu.
2. Sign up on the bulletin board for which date and service you would like to sponsor.

A member of the Hospitality Committee will be sure to have refreshments prepared and set up for your "Coffee Hour".

Checks should be made out to Church of the Ascension.





Small Groups:

A Powerful Opportunity to Energize Your Spiritual Journey with God

There Is Always an Empty Chair Waiting for You.

Are You Ready to Sit Down and Join Us?

Small Groups at Ascension are all about 3 to 15 (or so) individuals who join together for reading, listening, discussion, and prayer. There is always an Empty Chair in the room waiting for the next person to join. That Empty Chair is for you. Each group represents a gentle, but powerful, opportunity to learn more about the spiritual journey we all share with God.

The uniting focus for each group may vary, but that focus is always grounded in God's commitment to help each of us become the child of light He calls us to be. For instance, some of our groups focus on a Bible study, or the daily scripture, or an examination of a topic selected by the group members. Tuesday Night Dinners (except during Lent and Advent) are all about discussion and fellowship in a congenial atmosphere of shared food and friendship. The Rector's Forum enjoys spirited discussions about a book or topic selected by Fr. Michael and the group.

Ascension is hosting a new Small Group program beginning in June. "Education for Ministry (EfM) is a unique four-year distance learning certificate program in theological education based upon small-group study and practice. Since its founding in 1975, this international program has assisted more than 80,000 participants in discovering and nurturing their call to Christian service. EfM helps the faithful encounter the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition and bring it into conversation with their experiences of the world as they study, worship, and engage in theological reflection together." ¹ This program is being mentored by our very own Verger, Mike Beach.

Varied themes, group-selected meeting times and days (can be any day of the week), plus diverse groups of people represent options for you. Don't you have questions you would like to ask that might be harder to ask in larger settings? The Small Group setting offers opportunities to soak up the information discussed as well as the insights and prayers offered during your time together. The goal is to take God's personalized message with you and plug it into your day-to-day life. Like you, like each of us, we are all trying to grasp the truths that can guide us as we try to live out the plan God has for us.

What are you waiting for? Each group has a chair calling out your name. All you have to do is take a small chance and join in the adventure.

Please feel free to contact me at maggiemyrne@earthlink.net if you are interested.

1. *EfM Education for Ministry*, www.efm.sewanee.edu, Home page, June of 2015.

Respectfully submitted, Maggie Byrne Outhouse, Formation Ministry

SAVE THE DATES!

- **August 29th:** **Alzheimer's Awareness Walk at the Rose Bowl**
- **September 19th:** **Heal the Bay - Join us for the nation's largest coastal clean up! Picnic to follow event.**

HIATUS NOTICE

The **Tuesday Night Dinner Group** will be on hiatus until after Labor Day resuming on Tuesday, September 8, 2015.

Summer begins on June 21st!

As you are scuba diving, zip lining, hanging out at the beach, or just having fun, please remember to send in your pledge payments!



MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

PARISH WORK PARTY

SATURDAY, JUNE 13TH @ 8:30AM

The focus of this work party will be the Memorial Garden.

Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon

Saturday, June 20th

11:00am

Hawks Hall





A SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING EVENT!

3rd Annual Afternoon Tea
Saturday, May 16th, 2015



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

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JUNE 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 EfM Meeting 7pm Library	2 10am Tuesday Morning Prayer 6pm Dinner Group	3 5pm Mass 5:30pm Yoga	4 7am Mass 9am Forum Memorial Service for Esler Johnson 10:30am	5	6
7 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School	8	9 10am Tuesday Morning Prayer 6pm Dinner Group EfM Meeting 7pm Library	10 5pm Mass 5:30pm Yoga	11 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg	12	13 Parish Work Party 8:30am Vestry Planning Meeting 9am Hawks Hall
14 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School	15	16 10am Tuesday Morning Prayer 6pm Dinner Group 7pm Vestry Meeting	17 5pm Mass 5:30pm Yoga	18 7am Mass 9am Forum House Church/Dinner 6:30pm *contact parish office for location*	19	20 Women's Fellowship Potluck Luncheon 11am Hawks Hall
21 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School 	22	23 10am Tuesday Morning Prayer 6pm Dinner Group Fr. Bamberger Out of Town — Vacation	24 5pm Mass 5:30pm Yoga	25 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg JULY SPIRE ARTICLES DUE	26	27 Fr. Bamberger Out of Town — General Convention/Utah
28 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School CLERGY- MARIANNE ZAHN PMC MTG AT NOON	29	30 10am Tuesday Morning Prayer 6pm Dinner Group	1	2	3	4  Fr. Bamberger Out of Town — Vacation through July 11th
Fr. Bamberger Out of Town — General Convention/Utah through July 3rd						

SPIRE Newsletter Creator: Kim Lumino, Parish Administrator