

The SPIRE

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



Upcoming Events

February 9th- 5-7pm/Hawks Hall
Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Ash Wednesday Services

Wednesday, February 10th
7am, Noon, & 6pm

Mass &
Imposition of Ashes

Go to page 7 to learn more about
the meaning and origin of Ash
Wednesday.

February 15th-
PRESIDENTS DAY

February 16th- 7pm/Hawks Hall
Vestry Meeting

February 18th- 6:30pm (location
TBD) House Church/Dinner

February 20th-9am-Noon/Library
DOK Hosted Quiet Day
w/Eucharist

February 28th- Noon/Library
Parish Ministry Council Meeting

January 2016 Pledge Payment Snapshot

Budget Amount: \$235,000

YTD Budget:
\$37,913



YTD Actual:
\$39,261



From the Rector

Just when we think there will be no drama at the annual meeting, the Rector is always proved wrong. Thankfully, the drama was not parochial, but medical. Not once, but twice the paramedics had to be called. Thankfully, all is well with those involved, but what it does show is that Ascension is essentially a loving and caring community. We do not necessarily always pray as much as we should; but when it's needed, our thoughtful, loving prayer comes out. As we head into Lent, maybe a goal for all of us is to be more deliberate in our prayer. For me, I am committing myself to more meditation and prayer. Looking forward to seeing everyone at the pancake supper and the Ash Wednesday services.

MAB+

SAVE THE DATE!
FEBRUARY 9th, 2016

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

Come have your fair share of Pancakes for Supper!

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!

All proceeds will be donated to
Friends in Deed.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING: COFFEE HOUR SIGN-UPS

Until a new Hospitality/Fellowship Ministry Leader is found, anyone signed up for a coffee hour will have to supply their own food, and clean-up after the coffee hour.



We apologize for any inconvenience. A notice will be sent out once a new ministry leader is found.

Thank You

2016 Vestry Members

Officers:

Rector/CEO	The Very Reverend Canon Michael Bamberger
Senior Warden	Ted Bosley
Junior Warden	Jon Prentice
Clerk of the Vestry	Carol Rasmussen
Treasurer (<i>Budget, Investment</i>)	Mark Keith
Treasurer Emeritus	Lavette Teague
Verger (<i>Archives, Buildings and Grounds</i>)	Mike Beach

Term of Office

<u>2016 Term</u>	<u>2017 Term</u>	<u>2018 Term</u>
John Murphy	Meg Cox	Mark Keith
Ted Bosley	Carol Rasmussen	Bill Voegeli
Jon Prentice	Jessica Meehan	Jean Rowe



Some Special Thank You Kudos

At the January 31st Annual Meeting, Father Michael asked the congregation to especially recognize the contributions of our outgoing Senior Warden John Buchanan and our outgoing Treasurer Rob Stockly. He expressed gratitude to the Vestry class of 2015 (John Buchanan, Ross Kellock and Pam Harrison) for their dedicated service. Father Michael also gave a special thank you to Diane Rhodus as she retires from her many years as our Ministry Connector. Well done, good and faithful volunteers. Each of you has generously given us the gift of your time and talent, and we are grateful.

A thank you should also go to Jan Keppler-Kudla for organizing the pot luck, to Lisa Reed who partnered with Jan, and for all those who helped set up and clean up after the Annual Meeting.



Some pictures from the Annual Meeting on January 31st, 2016



Gratitude!

Our Stewardship Committee would like to express our gratitude to each of our parish families for your generosity, responses, and pledges for this year. Pledges for 2016 increased 7.5% compared to 2015. This increase was just shy of the goal for a 10% increase to meet the operating budget for 2016. We had several families increase their pledge and a few new ones too!

I would like to thank the Stewardship Committee members and all of those who supported us in this effort. The list includes so many people I hope I capture them all here.

- Committee Members: Susan Clifton, Martha Keates, Jon Prentice, Tim Hayden
- Speakers: Jon Prentice, Janel Hastings, Carl Foote
- Theme Winner: Deacon Ed
- Flyer handout design & printing: Jon Prentice
- Administrative & overall support: Father Michael, Kim Lumino, Mike Beach, Jean Rowe, John Buchanan, Ted Bosley, Pam Harrison

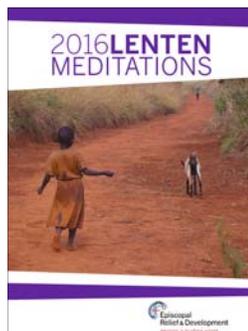
Thank You

By the way, it is not too late to send in your pledge! You may provide your pledge amount at any time this year. Please contact the Parish office either by emailing parish@ascension-sierramadre.com or calling 626.355.1133.

I am so grateful for everyone in our parish and for our little Village Church!

Jessica Meehan
Stewardship Committee Chair 2016

A FEW ONLINE RESOURCES FOR YOUR 2016 LENTEN JOURNEY: A TIME OF REFLECTION AND REPLENISHMENT...



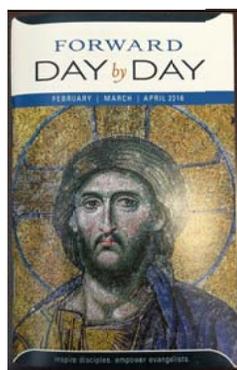
Episcopal Relief and Development Lenten Devotional

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

“Episcopal Relief & Development invites supporters to ‘Walk the Path of Lent’ with this year’s Lenten Meditations series.... Available in English and Spanish, this 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, **[including our own Fr. Michael Bamberger]**, who bring a range of perspectives as they reflect on Scripture and other sources of spiritual wisdom.”^{1,2}

Pick up a printed copy on the reception table in Hawks Hall, or go to www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/church-campaigns/lent to sign up for the free daily devotional email for the Lenten season.

- www.episcopalrelief.org/press-and-resources/press-releases/2016-press-releases/walk-the-path-of-lent-with-episcopal-relief-and-developments-2016-lenten-meditations
- www.episcopalrelief.org/church-in-action/church-campaigns/lent



Forward Day By Day

www.forwardmovement.org/Subscriptions.aspx (Subscription for the booklet)¹

www.prayer.forwardmovement.org (Options for Free Daily Prayer and Meditation as well as Pray the Daily Office)

“*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*. The meditations are rich in substance and offer a wide range of witness and experiences. Each month’s meditation is written by a different author. *Forward Day by Day* is available in the following editions: Regular Print, Spanish-language (called *Día a Día*), Large Print, E-mail, e-book, single copy, Braille, and cassette for those with a hearing impairment.”³

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

Online option for Daily Prayer (Different from *Forward Day by Day*) - Free

E-mail Subscription to *Forward Day by Day* (English Only) --\$10.00 for one year

Regular Print Subscription (English Edition) --\$22.00 for two years

www.forwardmovement.org/Subscriptions.aspx



2016 Lenten Carbon Fast

www.macucc.org/carbonfast (Free Daily Email)

The Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ provides a day-by-day opportunity to fast from carbon as a Lenten discipline. This Lenten daily devotional provides “spiritual exercises and informational resources [plus]...a concrete action to take every day.”⁴

There is no charge for the daily email.

www.macucc.org/carbonfast



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."⁵ The music provides a soft background for your thoughts.

There is no charge for this daily email.

Free App for mobile devices can be downloaded from the Apple Store at itunes.apple.com/us/app/d365-daily-devotionals/id875088782?ls=1&mt=8. Link is also available from the d365 home page.

www.d365.org/about_d365



3 Minute Retreat

www.loyolapress.com/3-minute-retreats-daily-online-prayer.htm

"3-Minute Retreats invite you to take a short prayer break right at your computer. Spend some quiet time reflecting on a Scripture passage. Knowing that not everyone prays at the same pace, you have control over the pace of the retreat. If you enjoy the 3-Minute Retreat and would like a new one e-mailed to you every morning, [register as a site member](#) and choose the 3-Minute Retreat e-newsletter. Each day a link to a new 3-Minute Retreat will be e-mailed to you, and each day you'll have a chance to spend three quiet, meaningful minutes in focused reflection."⁶ The music provides a soft background for your thoughts.

There is no charge for the daily email.

Free App for Apple mobile devices can be downloaded from the Apple App Store at itunes.apple.com/us/artist/loyola-press/id323368408. Link is also available from 3 Minute Retreat home page.

Free App for Android mobile devices can be downloaded from Android Google Play at play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.loyolapress.ThreeMinuteRetreat. Link is also available from 3 Minute Retreat home page.

www.loyolapress.com/about-3minute-retreats.htm?class_id=284&parent_class_id=

Please let me know about any online resources you find that are important to you. maggiemyrne@earthlink.net

Blessings to you and your families, Maggie Outhouse, Formation Ministry

Ascension Formation for Children and Youth

- 8 am – 9 am:** Childcare in the nursery
- 9 am – 10 am:** Elementary (Grades K-5) in the Atrium
 Jr. & Sr. Youth in the Parish House
- 10:15 am:** Childcare in the nursery

All Ages Sunday School in the Atrium
(Students join their families for Eucharist)

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



Youth volunteers are needed for our annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on February 9th from 5pm–7pm.

Contact Jobi Harrell
[\(jobiharrell@gmail.com\)](mailto:jobiharrell@gmail.com) to sign

NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Have you ever heard of a Mathushek piano? Well, neither had I until I discovered that this is the brand of our Hawks Hall instrument. The company was in existence from 1865 to 1958, which means that our piano is at least 58 years old. It's been at Ascension since my arrival here in 2000, but I don't know when or in what manner it came to us (if any of you can inform me, please do). What I can tell you is that it has served well beyond its productive years and deserves a gentle retirement! And Ascension deserves to have a quality instrument capable of providing choir rehearsal accompaniment as well as concert artistry in the sanctuary. Stay tuned as to how you can help make this goal attainable.

Now to our music for February ~

February 7, the Last Sunday after Epiphany will be observed by K. Lee Scott's brilliant *The Glory of Christ* and *Cherubim Song* by the Russian Dmitri Bortniansky. Be prepared for many *Alleluias* in anticipation of their Lenten sequestration.

Repertoire during Lenten Sundays in February includes:

O Savior of the World – John Goss

Ave Verum Corpus – Edward Elgar

O Lord, Throughout These Forty Days – Walter Pelz

Love and Mercy - also by Pelz

Hide Not Thy Face – Richard Farrant

Lamb of God – Samuel Webbe

Each of these anthems reflects the deliberately contemplative nature of Lenten music. May the quietly beautiful nature of this music swirl like a gentle cloud over your spirits, bringing calm and peace to your souls.

*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

Donate a key!!

Help us purchase a semi-concert grand piano (1987 7'4" Kawai) to replace the current Hawks Hall instrument. Goal: \$8,800 - \$100 per key. Donate one or more keys - for instance, an octave would be \$800.

Select your key(s) by signing the paper keyboard in the lobby - or donate anonymously should you prefer. Checks should be made out to Church of the Ascension, designated for "piano."

Raised to date: \$3,800

Still needed: \$5,000

Thanks so much!!



In December, we embarked on an effort to collect new pajamas for newborns and toddlers. The items were donated to the Angel Interfaith Network. This organization assists new moms or dads with babies or toddlers that are discharged from LA County/USC Medical Center. Together we donated 24 sets of pajama for some little guys and gals! Thanks for your help!

*Submitted by Scott Callihan,
Outreach Ministry Leader*



HOUSE CHURCH & DINNER

Thursday, February 18th

6:30 pm *Location TBD*

A sign-up sheet will be posted on Hawks Hall bulletin board.

Real Life ~

Let's continue our discussion about recovery. The following is by Dr. Ingrid Mathieu and appeared in Psychology Today, October 19, 2011.

*Real Faith***The Set Aside Prayer: Opening up to new possibilities.**

How many times have you discovered that you are actually standing in your own way? Old habits die hard. Old thinking seems entrenched. Long-held fears are holding tight, and opening up to new possibilities and new story lines seems impossible.

There is a prayer that many people in 12-Step Recovery say in the hope of having a new experience. The intention of the prayer is so simple and beautiful. It can be applied to any area of your life: wanting a new experience in relationship to yourself and others, a new experience of faith, any new experience of expanding your comfort zone into uncharted territory.

The Set Aside Prayer

God...Please help me set aside everything I think I know about myself, my disease, the 12 steps, and especially You;

So I may have an open mind and a new experience of all these things. Please let me see the truth.

The set aside prayer is about believing in new possibilities even though you can't see them. I once had an interesting conversation with someone about her experience of faith. She said that no one could have told her what chocolate tasted like before she tried it. Imagine trying to convince someone about the amazing taste of chocolate if all they ever had (and loved) was vanilla. There is no way that you can really articulate that sensorial event. Words are insufficient. One actually has to have the experience; but when you have never tried something and feel as if you are just fine on this side of the fence (vanilla is a perfectly enjoyable taste), you can talk yourself right out of anything foreign and new. And then you never really know what you are missing. This prayer opens the door.

May you have a new experience of yourself, your faith, and anything else you are trying to grow in your life. May it be all you ever wanted, even though you never could have articulated it even if you tried.

***Live well, live blessed, believe in new possibilities~
Deacon Ed***

What is Ash Wednesday and where did it originate?

The first day of Lent, Ash Wednesday comes the day after Shrove Tuesday. Traditionally a day of repentance, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent

At Ash Wednesday Masses and services, ashes are imposed on the foreheads of the faithful. The priest or minister marks the forehead of each participant with black ashes in the shape of a cross. Traditionally, the ashes come from the burning of the previous year's palms. At Ascension, parishioners bring the palms they have saved from last year to the church the week before Ash Wednesday. These are burned and used to create the ashes which Father Michael imposes on us. When applying the ashes, the priest says, "Remember, O man, that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return" to remind us of our mortality. After the service, a worshipper traditionally retains the cross until it wears off.

Lent has been observed as a preparation for Easter since the fifth century. In the medieval period, Ash Wednesday was the required annual day of penitential confession occurring after fasting and the remittance of the tithe.

Ashes were used in ancient times to express mourning. Dusting oneself with ashes was the penitent's way of expressing sorrow for sins and faults. Following that tradition, the Anglican Book of Common Prayer designates Ash Wednesday as a day of fasting.

Lent lasts 40 days not counting Sundays because by our tradition every Sunday is a little Easter.

**GREETERS/USHERS
NEEDED!**

We still need greeters/ushers for the 10:15am service.

Please consider helping out the existing families who are serving several times a month by committing to one Sunday a month.

Contact parishioner Geoff Meehan at 626-475-5546 for more information.

VOLUNTEER!

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

FEBRUARY 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	3 5:30pm Yoga	4 9am Forum	5	6 STEPHEN ROWE FUNERAL 11AM
FR. BAMBERGER OUT OF OFFICE - ALBUQUERQUE ER&D						
7 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School EFM Meeting at 2pm/Library	8	9 10am Prayer in the Chapel SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER 5PM—7PM HAWKS HALL	10 ASH WEDNESDAY 7AM MASS NOON MASS 6PM MASS 5:30pm Yoga 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	11 7am Mass 9am Forum	12	13
					FR. BAMBERGER OUT OF OFFICE - VACATION	
14 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School EFM Meeting at 2pm/Library CLERGY-MARIANNE ZAHN	15 OFFICE CLOSED 	16 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group 7PM VESTRY MEETING/ HAWKS HALL	17 6pm Mass 5:30pm Yoga 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	18 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg HOUSE CHURCH/ DINNER 6:30PM <i>*location TBD*</i>	19	20 DOK HOSTED QUIET DAY WITH EUCHARIST 9AM—NOON
FR. BAMBERGER OUT OF OFFICE - VACATION						
21 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School EFM Meeting at 2pm/Library	22	23 10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group	24 6pm Mass 5:30pm Yoga 7:30pm Choir Rehearsal	25 7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg MARCH SPIRE ARTICLES DUE	26	27
28 8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School EFM Meeting at 2pm/Library PARISH MINISTRY COUNCIL MEETING NOON/LIBRARY	29	1	2 6pm Mass Cancelled	3 7am Mass Cancelled	4	5
	FR. BAMBERGER OUT OF OFFICE - GOE EXAMS, NC					

Spire Creator: Kim Lumino, Parish Administrator