

The SPIRE

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



July 2016

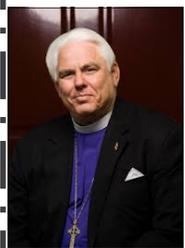
Upcoming Events

July 3rd - Clergy/The Rev'd
Pastor Joshua McGuffie

July 4th- Happy 4th of July!
Parish Office Closed

July 10th-
PMC Meeting/Noon
Library

July 16th-
Confirmation Retreat
9am - Noon / Hawks Hall



July 17th

**Bishop Visit/
Confirmation**
*Only 1 Mass at
9:30am*

Bishop J. Jon Bruno

July 19th- Vestry Meeting
7:00pm- Hawks Hall

July 21st-
House Church/Dinner
6:30pm - Location TBD

July 24th-
PMC Meeting/Noon
Library

Pledge Payment Snapshot

January - June 30th, 2016

2016 Budget Amount:
\$235,000

YTD Budget: \$127,498

YTD Actual: \$132,224



From the Rector

As I write this, I am sitting in the airport in Houston, Texas, having been deployed here again on behalf of Episcopal Relief and Development. My colleagues, the Venerable Russ Oeschel and the Rev'd Molly Field James, accompanied me as we



visited congregations and households affected by the storms. The issues around severe flooding continue.

While we heard some sad stories, we also heard stories of resilience and missional vision. And we visited with a few survivor cows.



Many of you know that over the years, Ascension has welcomed people in formation for ministry and for renewing their ministries. Many of these folks have been younger than I am. Many have been women. For decades now, I have believed it was my responsibility to open the doors for the next generation of Church leaders. In turn, I get inspiration and energy from working with people with fresh ideas and new energy. Molly commented on how our deployment had been an experience of having the door opened for her. I want to thank Ascension for helping me welcome folks like Molly into our life as a congregation and for sending me out to do the work of the Church on behalf of Episcopal Relief and Development.

Love and blessings,

MAB+

A SUMMER PRAYER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

LORD,
THIS SUMMER WILL BE
FULL OF NEW EXPERIENCES
FOR ME AND MY FRIENDS:
NEW JOBS, EXCITING TRIPS,
AND VACATIONS TO PLACES
WE'VE NEVER BEEN BEFORE.
GROW US, STRETCH US, GUIDE
US
THROUGH WHATEVER WE DO.
AND WHEREVER WE GO,
MAY WE END THE SUMMER
JUST A LITTLE MORE LIKE YOU.



The Psalms are raw & honest. These ancient poems comprise the bulk of our prayer book and are vast and varied in their tone and content. Walter Brueggemann in his theological commentary *The Message of the Psalms* separates them into three groups. Psalms of

Orientation → *Disorientation* → *New Orientation*

Psalms of Orientation depict “seasons of wellbeing” which give thanks for blessings and rejoice in the *reliability* of God. Then there are Psalms of Disorientation which recognize that at times God does not appear to be in control, the old way of viewing the world no longer works. Suffering, loss, pain, or a crisis cause us to question the reliability of God. Sometimes our only honest response is to lament. Jesus quotes a lament Psalm while on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (22:1). I love that we have the lament Psalms in the Scriptures because, as a mentor of mine likes to say, it is as though God is saying, “It’s okay, you can talk to me that way.”

During one of the lowest times of my life, a particular portion of Psalm 71 gave me hope,

“You have made me see trials, many and bitter, but you will restore my life again. From the depths of the earth you will bring me up again. You will increase my honor, and comfort me once again” (71:20-21).

Katie walked with me through “the darkest valley” a few years ago (23:4). The other night as we were cleaning the kitchen, we were overcome by God’s faithfulness. A song came on that a friend had shared with me while I was down in the pit of despair:

*All this pain
I wonder if I’ll ever find my way
I wonder if my life could really change at all
All this earth
Could all that is lost ever be found
Could a garden come up from this ground at all*

*You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of the dust
You make beautiful things
You make beautiful things out of us
(Gungor, Beautiful Things)*



Tears fell down our faces as I said, “Could you have imagined that God would be this good to us, that God would redeem so much and it would be so incredibly beautiful?”

I write this, brothers and sisters, as a Thanksgiving Psalm. In Psalms of New Orientation, the Psalmist proclaims to the people of God that weeping and mourning may barge in for a night - but joy and dancing break through in the morning (30:5,11). Or, in essence, in this world pain, loss, and suffering will have their say; but God has the final word. God always gets the final word. Hallelujah.



Submitted by Mark Bradshaw, Ministry Intern

June 27, 2016

from *The Bishop's Office*
Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles

To the Clergy and Lay Leaders of the Diocese

A Message from Bishop Jon Bruno: "This evening Mary and I are at Good Samaritan Hospital where I have been admitted for treatment to clear a urinary tract infection. I am receiving excellent care, and I thank you for your prayers as the healing process continues."

Bishop Bruno and his family also respectfully request no visitors at this time. Updates on Bishop Bruno's condition will be provided as they become available. Information on rescheduling of appointments is available from Ms. Gail Urquidi, Executive Assistant to the Bishop. Cards and notes may be sent in care of the Bishop's Office at the Cathedral Center.

Again, thank you for your ongoing prayers on behalf of Bishop Bruno.

Posted for the Bishop's Office by Robert Williams,
Canon for Community Relations, Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles

Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, Cathedral Center of St. Paul,
840 Echo Park Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90026

SAVE THE DATE!

Coastal Cleanup Day -September 17, 2016

- The largest volunteer day on the planet!
- Heal the Bay coordinates more than 50 beach, inland, dive, and kayak cleanup sites in L.A. County.
- Ascension has participated in this event for the past three years: join us as we go to the Arroyo Seco inland clean up from 9 am - 11:30 am. Carpools available.

Contact Scott Callihan to sign up or for more information.



NOTES FROM THE LOFT

Thanks to soprano Susan Beach for providing solos for us on June 19 and to Carol Rasmussen, soprano, and Andrea Booth, alto, for singing on the 26th. Thanks also to Geraldine Keeling for taking the musical helm on the 12th when I was out of town.

In keeping with the holiday weekend, July 3 will feature patriotic music and will focus on American composers. On the occasion of Bishop Bruno's visit, July 17, a cadre of choir members will interrupt their hiatus to sing for us. Anthems to be presented are *O God, Beyond All Praising* by Holst/Proulx, and John Rutter's *A Clare Benediction* (if you missed our last Evensong, this is your opportunity to hear the Holst/Proulx piece). As of this writing, special music for the rest of the month has not been confirmed, so you'll need to attend services to discover what's in store for you!

Keep singing those hymns – I'm listening from the loft!

Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

~ Psalm 96



Debora Huffman, Director of Music and Organist

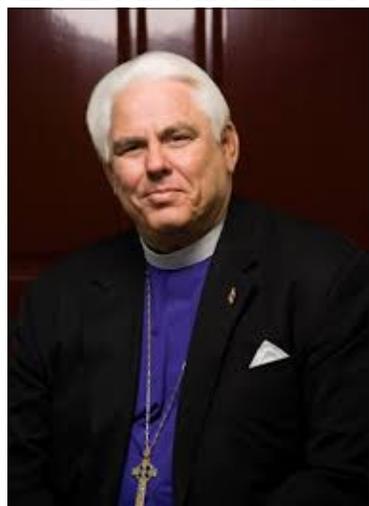
6 Flags Youth Trip and Family Day!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14TH



Youth will depart at 8:30 am from church and return at 8:30 pm. Any families with children under age 9 & all others interested in a trip to the park that day will receive the discounted group ticket price!

Contact Jobi Harrell for more information.



SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, July 17th

Episcopal Visit by
Bishop J. Jon Bruno

**only one service that
day at 9:30am**



2016 Father's Day Gifts by
Ascension's Youth Group

SUMMER



Summer has officially begun!

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

Real Life ~

Real Faith

On June 24, 2016, President Obama designated the Stonewall Inn as a National Monument dedicated to LGBT rights. As many of you are aware, I discussed the Stonewall riots in my sermon following the Orlando massacre. Needless to say, I was excited and humbled that I was a witness to history.

Several friends used that phrase “witness to history” too, and it got me to thinking. Yes, I was there that night; but is participating in history the same as witnessing history? Perhaps what really happened that night was that a whole lot of people did some serious “gospel living.”

Being Christians, we have a choice. We can witness history or we can participate in creating change. We can bring everyone along or leave some behind. We can make the hard choices or look the other way. We can welcome change or we can fear change.

Every day without fail, opportunities present themselves that prepare us to answer that ever nagging question from God: “Did you feel my pain and did you do something about it?” Perhaps witnesses look on and participators create lasting change that makes God smile. Either way, sooner or later each of us will have to answer that question: “Did you feel my pain and did you do something about it?”

Live well, live blessed, live on the edge. Deacon Ed+

HOUSE CHURCH & DINNER

Thursday, July 21st

6:30pm

Location TBD

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

*It's good
to be
HOME!*



EFM Registration for September 2016



It is time to start thinking about signing up for EFM this summer. The course will start in September. This program is a four year program that starts with the Old Testament, continues with the New Testament, Church History, and concludes with Theology and Ethics. It is a course that will change your life. You will grow into considering problems from a theological perspective and finding where God fits into it. The class is limited to 12 people and needs a minimum of 6 to start. There is a cost of \$350 each year and all books are provided for you. If you have a serious interest, you may contact me at mbeach99@msn.com Registration will continue through August, but don't delay. *Mike Beach, Verger*

GREETERS/USHERS NEEDED!

We need greeters/ushers for the 10:15 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.



HAPPY 4TH
OF JULY

A little humor
for this
month's Spire



IT HAPPENED ONE PENTECOST...



St. Swithin's

by the Rev. Jay Sidebotham

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Sunday School Information

- * Elementary class with Brittany Banis, 9 am - 10 am.
- * Youth Group with Jobi Harrell, 9 am - 10 am
- * All Ages Sunday school, 10:15 - Peace.

In case you missed it, the 2016 Parish Photo Directory is now available. If you would like an electronic copy in PDF format, please email the parish office at parish@ascension-sierramadre.com.

If you would like a printed copy, there are some available on the reception table in Hawks Hall. A \$5.00 donation is requested to help offset the cost of color printing.
Thank You

Church Photo Directory



A couple of photos from the last House Church at the home of Lavette Teague on June 16th, 2016.

The Dodgers welcome
The Diocese of Los Angeles!

Friday, September 2nd
7:00 p.m.

Los Angeles Dodgers
Episcopal Night



vs.

San Diego
Padres

Tickets only \$20!

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

Fireworks after the game!

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

July 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
				Fr. Bamberger Vacation		
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<p>CLERGY- JOSHUA MCGUFFIE</p> <p>8am Mass 9am Xian Ed.Hour 9am Episcopal 101 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School</p>	<p>OFFICE CLOSED</p> 	<p>10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group</p>	<p>5:30pm Yoga</p>	<p>7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg</p>		<p>Private Meeting 9am-6pm Hawks Hall</p>
Fr. Bamberger Vacation						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
<p>8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 9am Episcopal 101 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School</p> <p>PMC Meeting/Noon Library</p>	<p>Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) in Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm</p>	<p>10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group</p>	<p>5:30pm Yoga</p>	<p>7am Mass 9am Forum</p>		<p>Confirmation Retreat 9am-Noon Hawks Hall</p>
				Deacon Ed at Deacon Retreat/ Cathedral Center		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
<p>*9:30am Mass*</p> <p>BISHOP VISIT/ CONFIRMATION</p>		<p>10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group</p> <p>7pm Vestry Meeting Hawks Hall</p>	<p>5:30pm Yoga</p>	<p>7am Mass 9am Forum 10:30am Staff Mtg</p> <p>House Church/ Dinner 6:30pm Location TBD</p>		
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
<p>8am Mass 9am Xian Ed. Hour 10:15am Mass 10:15 Sunday School</p> <p>PMC Meeting/Noon Library</p>	<p>Pasadena Photochromers Meeting (private) in Hawks Hall 6:30pm—9:30pm</p>	<p>10am Prayer in the Chapel 6pm Dinner Group</p> <p>AUGUST SPIRE ARTICLES DUE</p>	<p>5:30pm Yoga</p>			
31						Fr. Bamberger at Camp Stevens from August 6th through August 13th