



The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA

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The Community of Faith

By the Reverend Dan Justin

A few years ago I was home for the Thanksgiving Holiday visiting my family and I had the opportunity to attend an event at my parents' church. They attend a large, evangelical church that is nothing like St. Michael's. It is not my cup of tea but they adore it. The event was an all day open house the day after Thanksgiving. The idea was to provide a place to come and have peace, quiet, and reflection amidst the craziness of shopping on Black Friday.

The church set up stations throughout the building inviting people to move through and spend time at each station. The stations used artwork, some of which were my father's paintings, and other media giving people the chance to reflect. Some stations were interactive where you might have to write something or do something. Quiet music was playing throughout the place. I must say, I was very impressed with everything.

The final station was in the front of the church where "communion" was set up. Sitting out on the stage were platters of broken up saltine crackers and little plastic cups of grape juice. There were printed signs inviting you to quietly and reflectively take communion. I stood nearby and watched people come to this station, kneel down alone, and take communion.

Now I don't mean to criticize or sound elitist—but as I watched this unfold I could not help but think that this church was inadvertently feeding one of the greatest problems with the Church today! Christianity, by design, is to be lived in community. It is not meant to be a private journey of faith for the individual. The Eucharist is a family meal to which all are invited. We come together—never alone! At the table we remember that we are accepted by God. We come to the table with our family—just as we are accepted by God we accept one another.

The holidays can be a time of isolation for so many people. Loneliness can weigh heavily on people. A spirituality that primarily promotes

an individual faith has the potential of feeding isolation. While it is imperative that we have a deep personal spirituality, we must never lose sight of the importance of the community of faith. Episcopal/Anglican spirituality has community and common prayer at its heart. The community and our common prayer is the center of our life of faith. The community of faith—*this* community of faith—is here to remind you that you are never alone.



This Advent and Christmas season St. Michael's offers numerous opportunities for reflection, worship, and communion. Come and join the community! Feel free to leave the crackers and grape juice at home. An entire feast has been laid out for us and we are each part of a family that gathers around the table.

May you have a blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas!

Blessings,
Dan+

Blue Christmas

We welcome the community to participate in our annual Blue Christmas service. Blue Christmas is a service which recognizes that the holidays are not a source of joy for many people. They are a time of pain, depression, loneliness, and grief. Difficulty and depression at the holidays can be for any number of reasons.

Blue Christmas is, at its core, a healing service. It will not look like any other service offered here at St. Michael's. The sanctuary will be lit primarily by candle light. The music will be different. It will be a quiet, contemplative service with healing prayer and the anointing with oil made available. The service will also include the Holy Eucharist. We are excited to welcome back Christopher Montella, our former seminarian, as our preacher for this service.

We gather as a community to honor, pray for, and bless those members or friends for whom this holiday is difficult. And of course, all are welcome to attend—even if you are not blue this Christmas. Join us as we pray for others.

The Blue Christmas service will take place on **Wednesday, December 10, 2014, at 7:00 pm** in the church.

2014 Advent and Christmas Schedule

Advent Lessons and Carols	Sunday, December 7, at 5:00 pm
Blue Christmas	Wednesday, December 10, at 7:00 pm
Holiday Cheer	Saturday, December 13, at 10:00 am
Children's Pageant	Wednesday, December 24, at 5:00 pm
Holy Eucharist	Wednesday, December 24, immediately after pageant.
Christmas Eve Reception	Wednesday, December 24, immediately after the service
Christmas Music	Wednesday, December 24, at 9:30 pm
Holy Eucharist	Wednesday, December 24, at 10:00 pm
Christmas Morning Breakfast	Thursday, December 25, at 9:00 am in the Ministry Center
Christmas Day Service	Thursday, December 25, at 10:00 am



Crop Hunger Walk a Huge Success!

By Nancy Woods

I am reminded of the Gospel lesson on Christ the King Sunday from Matthew 25: 31-46 where Jesus tells us that when he was hungry we gave him food—"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

The community of St. Michael's did just that on November 2nd at the Crop Walk along with many others from faith communities in the Valley. There were 23 of us, from toddlers to senior citizens, who actually walked the walk, the parishioners who walked the walk by a donation from the Outreach budget funded through our pledges and those who made individual donations and sent contributions from family and friends. Thank you one and all.

The money raised by the San Fernando Valley Crop Hunger Walk will go to people here in the Valley and around the world. Plus, those of us who did the 3K had a great time and looked spiffy in our purple St. Michael's Crop Walk T-shirts. We were quite visible walking the route in Northridge with passersby honking, waving and cheering us on.

St. Michael's demonstrated that we are committed to following the teachings of Jesus by generously supporting the Walk and hope all will do so again next year—in our purple T-shirts.



December Birthdays

Day	Name
1	Mary Ann Jacobson Hallie Walker
2	Brett Wong
11	Hanna Rafter
15	Laz Meiman
18	Caroline Smith
19	Preston Fray Will Pryor
22	Dawn Bassman
23	Meg Pryor
24	André Herrmann
28	Avery Wright Grace Daniels
29	Cliff Dektar

December Anniversaries

Day	Name
10	Jay & Marjie Hathaway

Should you be listed here?

Or, if you wish to leave your birthday or anniversary unpublished, give the church office a call or e-mail administrator@stmikessc.org to let us know. Please Note: Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month.

Read the MIKE Online! Go to the St. Michael's website, www.stmikessc.org, and click on Newsletter. Back issues are available there as well.

Treasurer's Corner

October 2014—Revenue and Expense Summary

	October Actual	October Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenue	\$ 28,233	\$ 36,067	\$401,280	\$360,674
Total Expense	34,164	36,065	378,139	360,656
Net	\$ (5,931)	\$ 2	\$ 23,141	\$ 18



The celebration of Christmas is a special time at St. Michael and All Angels. Sundays in Advent started on November 30th and end on December 21st. Our Blue Christmas service will be held on December 10th. On Christmas Eve there will be two services, one at 5:00pm that includes the children's Christmas Pageant and a 9:30 pm service that begins with special Christmas music and concludes with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Christmas Day we will have a breakfast at 9:00 am and a 10:00 am worship service.

Holiday Cheer is scheduled for December 13th from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm. This is our largest outreach project of the year and there are many opportunities for the parish family to participate and support this holiday activity. Meredith Reese can answer any questions you might have.

Last month we concluded our Stewardship Campaign and we thank members of the parish family that have made their pledge. Anyone who did not make a pledge is encouraged to complete this before year end. Our pledges determine what St. Michael's can accomplish in the coming year.

As we, the community of St. Michael and All Angels, await the birth of the Christ Child, the parish family is invited to enjoy the beauty, sacredness, and pageantry of our many Christmas activities and services. Participate and enjoy the many opportunities to enrich your sense of community with members of the church and share the gifts God has given you.

We wish you all the peace and joy of the Christmas season.

An Advent Reflection

By Eliza Diliberti

I find it incredibly hard to be at peace during Advent. The Christmas advertising that blasts on every channel drowns out spiritual thoughts. I try to hold onto feelings of charity toward others, but inevitably the holiday season is one of extreme busyness and frenzy—and stress. I'm not a happy person during the Christmas season. The giddiness of holiday revelers is alien to me. And the extreme indulgence and consumerism that take place in the name of Christmas frustrates me to no end.

Additionally, the days literally grow darker and colder. Here in Southern California I am safe from the icy fingers of winter, but somehow the days still seem to weigh on me.

I struggle with Advent.

And yet, there is a special relationship between faith and struggle. I can't quite describe it, but I know it's there. And I think it's something that can be sacred and beautiful. I would love to turn my seasonal struggle into something worthy of giving to God, something sacred and beautiful.

What would happen, I wonder, if I offered up this Advent season to God? What if I handed over all of my suffering, anxiety, and judgment? What if I lived each day thoughtfully and lovingly? What would happen to my Advent? What would happen to me?

Would I experience suffering, but also mercy? Would I recognize my weaknesses, but find strength? Would I be able to empathize with people's sadness, but also with their joy?



I see suffering everywhere. I see it in the grocery store line when people who are paying with food stamps have to put important items back. I see it in people who endure deep depressions when the light goes out of their eyes. Unfortunately, sometimes suffering is all I see.

I seem to easily forget what Jesus teaches me—that I'm missing something in this bleak view of the world. I'm ignoring the mercy in the world, the forgiveness, the resilience. There is hardship, but there is recovery and salvation. God's healing love is in the world—and I can be a part of it! How wonderful.

This Advent, I will offer up myself and my weeks to God. I will be mercy and love and forgiveness. I will anticipate Jesus's coming into the world by incorporating his amazing perspective into my own. I will look for God among the suffering, myself included. This Advent will still be a struggle, but hopefully it will be a sacred and beautiful one.

Lessons and Carols

You are cordially invited to a Service of Lessons & Carols on **Sunday, December 7th, at 5:00 pm**

Please come to the sanctuary to celebrate this season of Advent by listening to and singing along with some of this season's beautiful music. We'll sing some favorites from the hymnal, new arrangements from music director Kristen Toedtman, selections from Handel's Messiah sung by our soprano Colleen Graves and played on the organ by Duane Steadman...and more.

Here We Come A-Caroling!

Join us on **Friday, December 12th,** for our annual Caroling outing. In conjunction with the Outreach Ministry, we visit nursing homes and private homes in the area to spread the warm cheer of Christmas with those who can't make it to Sunday services. It is always a highlight of the season and ALL are welcome!

Meet at **6:00 pm** in the Choir Room (upper parking lot) for a singing warm-up and to receive maps.

We will finish with a reception and celebration in the Ministry Center, just as the elves are finishing preparations for Holiday Cheer. This is a surefire way to infuse the rest of Advent with the true spirit of the season.

Please direct any questions to Kristen Toedtman at kristentoedtman@gmail.com or 323.496.1502.

HOLIDAY CHEER!

2
0
1
4

A Celebration for Families in Need (of Good Cheer!)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13TH FROM 8AM - 2PM



VOLUNTEER TO:

SHOP for a child

DECORATE and set up on Friday, Dec 12th

PITCH IN on the day of Saturday, Dec 13th

SIGN UP:

email: stmikesoutreach@gmail.com



Holiday Cheer benefits the families of
MEND and Good Shepherd-Angel Guardian Shelters

ST. MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
3646 Coldwater Canyon Ave, Studio City, CA 91604
(818) 763-9193



The Calendar

December 2014

Sunday Schedule • *Sunday Services are 8:00 am (no choir) and 10:30 am (with choir) in the Sanctuary.*
 • *Adult Learning Opportunity begins at 9:15 in the Ministry Center*
 • *Sunday School begins at 10:15 with Family Sing in the Ministry Center; the children are brought into Eucharist for the Peace.*
 • *Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 am service unless otherwise noted.*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 St. Andrew	2	3 7:30 pm Young Adults Group (L)	4	5	6 Nicholas, Bishop of Myra
7 Advent 2 12:00 noon Youth Group (L) 12:00 noon St. Michael's Outreach (CO) 5:00 pm Advent Lessons & Carols (S)	8	9 7:00 pm Finance Committee (CO)	10 7:00 pm Blue Christmas (S)	11 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)	12 Our Lady of Guadalupe	13 8:00 am Holiday Cheer (MC)
14 Advent 3	15	16 7:00 pm Vestry (L)	17 7:00 pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal (S)	18 7:30 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)	19	20
21 Advent 4	22 St. Thomas	23	24 Christmas Eve <i>Parish Office closed</i> 5:00 pm Holy Eucharist & Children's Pageant (S) 9:30 pm Christmas Music (S) 10:00 pm Holy Eucharist (S)	25 Christmas Day <i>Parish Office closed</i> 9:00 am Christmas Morning Breakfast (MC) 10:00 am Holy Eucharist (S)	26 St. Stephen	27 St. John
28 Christmas 1 11:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry (MC)	29 Holy Innocents	30	31 New Year's Eve <i>Parish Office closed</i>			

Locations:
 CO Church Office
 MR Music Room
 FR Fireside Room
 MC Ministry Center
 L The Loft (formerly the stage)
 S Sanctuary

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Vision Statement

We are a welcoming and evolving community of conscience engaged in the renewal of our faith by embracing diversity and encouraging growth through prayer, scholarship, social action, and artistic endeavor.

Our Mission Priority

Our mission priority is to focus on the United Nations' First Millennium Goal: To eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.