



The Mike

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

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Resolutions or Rule of Life?

By the Reverend Dan Justin

As January rolls around many of us begin to think about New Year resolutions. To be honest, I have never had all that much success keeping my resolutions. Maybe that's why I always make more than one - better odds of accomplishing at least one of them. A few years back I resolved to read more. I wanted to break free of reading only my favorite genre of novels and explore different kinds of literature. I haven't done too badly with this resolution and I enjoy it, so I plan to renew it for 2018. Naturally, I always resolve to exercise more in order to shed some pounds. That one has been more elusive.

Over the years, many people have mentioned to me that they were going to make resolutions around spiritual growth. They were going to read the Bible cover to cover over the course of the year, or they were going to volunteer more in an outreach ministry. Those resolutions are indeed admirable and commendable. I wonder, though, if resolutions about our lives of faith are the best plan? Perhaps creating a rule of life is better than a resolution.

The idea of a rule of life echoes back to the early days of monasticism in Christianity. Men and women, wanting to dedicate their entire lives to Christ, would enter monasteries and convents, choosing to live their lives by a particular "rule." The most famous of these is the Benedictine Rule, which is anchored in the disciplines of prayer, service, and hospitality. As time moved on, other famous rules became popular. The rule of life followed by Dominicans was built on the foundation of regular prayer, study, and a commitment to proclamation of the Gospel through preaching. The Franciscan rule of life is based in voluntary poverty and loving service to the poor.

Did you know that the Episcopal Church still operates both monasteries and convents today? Places like the Community of Divine Love in San Gabriel, the Society of St. John the Divine in Boston, and Mount Calvary in Santa Barbara still have monks living and praying in them each day. Other Orders, such as the Anglican Dominicans or the Brotherhood of St. Andrew,

provide an opportunity to live aspects of the contemplative life without actually living in community. They are available to all Episcopalians and do not require ordination or any other prerequisites. The blessing and beauty of these Orders is that they provide structure and expectations regarding spiritual practices. Take the Anglican Dominicans, for example. Those wishing to participate in this order promise to pray the Daily Office of Morning and Evening prayer each day, study the Bible one hour per day, participate in a preaching ministry of some kind each week, and to make a financial



pledge to the church. Those four things make up their Rule of Life.

Author and Episcopal Priest, Margaret Guenther, in her book *At Home in the World: A Rule of Life for the Rest of Us*, suggests that, "Rules structure and punctuate our lives." She suggests that each Christian can write their own Rule of Life. What would your Rule include?

The idea of each person in the parish creating their own rule of life is wonderful. But the Episcopal Church, in our unique way of being Christian, has always placed greater emphasis on the Church in community, rather than on individual faith. It makes me wonder, should St. Michaels create a rule of life? It could be a voluntary rule providing structure to our common life. Members of St. Michaels could, on their own, commit to following the St. Michaels rule of life. It could provide a way of being in the world that members of St. Michaels choose to live by. The more I think about it, the more I like it. So, here is what I came up with for the St. Michaels rule of life:

Members of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church aspire to worship weekly, pray daily, learn constantly, serve joyfully, and give generously.

You may quickly notice that this rule is based on our vision statement. St. Michael's vision is "to be a welcoming, inclusive Christian community growing in faith through worship, prayer, study, and social action. This rule identifies actionable disciplines found in the vision statement. Each aspect of the Rule – worship, prayer, learning, serving, and giving – are spiritual disciplines through which we will encounter God. They are a means to an end.

This year I hope you will join me in committing yourself to the St. Michaels rule of life. It is more than a resolution. If we all commit to worshiping weekly, praying daily, learning constantly, serving joyfully, and giving generously, not only will we grow personally, but our parish will grow as well. Our vision statement can and will begin to be realized. What a wonderful thing that would be!

Blessings,

Dan+

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Rector	1
Treasurer's Corner	2
Warden Articles	2
Annual Meeting Info	3
Birthdays & Anniversaries	3
Convention Report	4
Holiday Photos	5 & 6
January Calendar	7

Senior Warden's Report

For the past three years, I have been privileged to serve as Senior Warden at St. Michaels. There are many things that I am grateful for over past three years.

I am grateful for each of you in the church community. As your Vestry leadership, we asked each of you to renew your commitment to St. Michaels, to find your passion, identify your role, and dive in to make St. Michaels a place where we could see our faith in action.



What a true blessing it was to watch our parish community come together to support the work and mission of our church. Each person took a role in making St. Michaels come alive in a truly meaningful, and spiritual way. Whether it was volunteering with one of the many commissions, being an ambassador to new members, serving as an usher or acolyte, attending a parish activity for the first time, or telling your friends outside of the church community about the amazing work we do and inviting them to the celebration - you made a difference. Thank you.

Another was the incredible individuals that served on the Vestry during my term. Each one brought an extraordinary gift and gave countless hours on a daily or weekly basis, focusing on the priorities and mission of church, ensuring that the programs and vision we committed to were successful.

And lastly, I am filled with gratitude for working closely with Father Dan. His spiritual leadership and pastoral care has continued to allow me to grow personally and I believe our parish is stronger and alive because of his leadership and direction.

Tina Wilson, Outgoing Senior Warden

Junior Warden's Report

Greetings and Happy 2018!

While I am not one to make New Year's resolutions, instead I believe that every new year does present the opportunity for growth and change; therefore I offer the following:



In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps. Proverbs 16:9 (NIV)

"...For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

One of the changes in store for me is that, as I finish my 3-year term, not only will I not be on the Vestry, I will no longer attend monthly Vestry meetings for the first time since I began as Clerk in October 2009. It has been my honor to serve on the Vestry these years and especially for the past year, as Junior Warden. I have had the pleasure of serving with many faithful and committed Vestry members and will miss their camaraderie.

I also value the commitment and support that all of you bring to our parish, and I appreciate all that you do to make it so warm, vibrant and welcoming. You have helped to create something unique and fantastic, and I look forward to being here every Sunday.

When the new Vestry convenes next month at their retreat, they will set the course for 2018. I have tremendous faith in their leadership and that God has great things in store for St. Michaels this year.

With gratitude,

Alex Morales, Outgoing Junior Warden

Thank You for Your Service!

This year four members of the vestry complete their service. Tina Wilson, Alex Morales, Diane Ballowe, and Amber Russo. Each of these people were faithful in their service to St. Michael and All Angels. Each of them contributed in wonderful ways.

Tina Wilson has served as our Senior Warden for the past three years. During that time, she has provided wonderful advice and support to me. She has led our stewardship campaigns for the past three years. Tina is quick to jump in to plan and execute special events in the life of the parish. She has been a wonderful Senior Warden, and I am grateful for her leadership.

Alex Morales has served as our Junior Warden for the past year. Although Alex is completing his three-year term, he has been with the vestry for a lot longer than that. Prior to his election to the vestry, he served as the clerk of the vestry. That means he attended vestry meetings and kept the minutes. In all his various roles and tasks, he did a stellar job. We will certainly miss his wise counsel on the third Tuesday of each month.

Diane Ballowe completes her three years as a vestry member. Each month she enthusiastically reported on what is happening in Sunday School. In 2017, Diane became the clerk of the vestry. Her attention to detail shines through as she produces flawless minutes of each vestry meeting. I am thrilled to report that Diane plans to continue to serve as clerk of the vestry beyond completion of her term as a member of the vestry (the clerk of the vestry is not required to be a voting member of the vestry).

Amber Russo also completes her third year on the vestry. She has also done a great job, always advocating for the children of the parish. While at a vestry meeting, Amber learned about the Children's Pastor position and believed that her gifts and skills matched the positions demands. She was certainly right about that. Since beginning as our Children's Pastor she has brought such positive change and energy to our Sunday School program. We will miss her on the vestry, but we are thrilled that she will continue her role as Children's Pastor.

Once again, thank you to Tina, Alex, Diane, and Amber. Your time, leadership, and commitment has been appreciated by all.

Treasurer's Corner

November 2017—Revenue and Expense Summary

	November Actual	November Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenue	\$ 24,551	\$ 33,293	\$366,189	\$399,520
Total Expense	40,267	39,379	433,000	433,164
Net	(\$ 15,716)	(\$ 6,086)	(\$ 66,811)	(\$ 33,644)

Annual Meeting to be held Sunday, January 21, 2018

St. Michael's Annual Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 21, 2018 immediately following the 10:30am service. The Annual Meeting provides members of the parish the opportunity to hear and read reports about the ministries of the church during the previous year. A complete financial report, including a presentation of the 2018 Budget, will be provided by the parish Treasurer. Members will be given an opportunity to ask any questions they have about the operations of the church. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, members will elect new members of the vestry and delegates to Diocesan Convention. Bios for the three nominees for vestry are printed in this newsletter. They have also been printed in our Sunday morning bulletins for the past 30 days.

In the Diocese of Los Angeles, only "Qualified Electors" are eligible to vote at the Annual Meeting. What is a qualified elector? Any person, over the age of 16 years old, who attends church regularly, receives communion at least three times per year, and makes a financial contribution (or is a member of a family who makes a financial contribution) to support the ministry of the parish. As required by Diocesan Canons, a list of qualified electors is printed and posted in the Ministry Center 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

The slate of Vestry nominees was selected by the Vestry Nominating Committee. Nominations were open to all eligible members during October and November. The committee completed its work in early December. Because nominations were open to all in late 2017, no nominations from the floor are allowed during the Annual Meeting.

Please note there is a one-year unfulfilled term currently open on the vestry. As per the parish by-laws, the vestry may elect an eligible member to fill that open position. This will, hopefully, happen at the January vestry meeting.

The Annual Meeting is not all business. It is also a time for food and fellowship. A potluck lunch will be served at the meeting. Please sign up to bring a dish to share with the parish family.

If you have any questions about the Annual Meeting, serving on the vestry, or the roles and duties of the vestry, please see Fr. Dan.

Jennifer Best

Jennifer Best has been an active member of St Michaels and all Angels since 2012. She has been involved in Community Outreach

Projects including Holiday Cheer, Crop walk and the Interfaith Food Pantry. She is married to Tina Wilson and they have three children, Nikolay, Vitaly and Masha. St Michael's and all Angels' family continues to be a source of spiritual strength for both Jennifer and her family. "We came to St. Michaels in search of a place to worship during the advent season. Over the past 5 years, we have found something even greater; a home that is inclusive, engaging and committed to a creating a thriving spiritual community for everyone no matter where they are on their journey. My family and I have been truly blessed to be a part this parish."

Frank Barberia

Frank was born and raised in Los Angeles. As a young man, he served in the Navy and worked in the local and state political world before getting his teaching credential. Frank has worked for most of his career in the Burbank Unified School District where he currently teaches Social Sciences at Burbank High School. In previous parishes, he actively was involved in Outreach ministries and Youth Formation. St. Michael's has been a spiritual home for Frank for two years, where he organizes the monthly sack lunch program for MEND, serves as a liturgical MC, and helps support the work of the Outreach ministry. Frank and his wife, Kristin, met at All Saints Church in Pasadena, and have two children, Elena who is a junior at the University of Arizona and Andreas who is a Junior at New Roads High School in Santa Monica.

Gail Wright

Gail Wright has been a member of the St. Mike's parish since late 2000, when she sought to find a "home" for worship and the baptism of her youngest daughter Monie. Her husband Bill has served on the Vestry and is currently Head Usher. Monie and her older sister Avery have been active participants in church during their youth and high school years, both serving on the altar, and Gail taught Sunday school when today's parish college students were toddlers. She serves as Chalice Bearer as well. Gail has spent her career marketing insurance and financial services, for the last 28 years at AIG in the Retirement Income Solutions division, where she is Vice President of Marketing Communications. She and Bill have resided in Studio City since 1998.

Walk-About With Bishop Bruce

Our area Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Diane Jardine Bruce, is coming to St. Michaels for a "Walk-About" on Saturday, February 10th from 10:00am to 2:00pm. She invites members of the parish family to join her for this exciting and interesting event. The Bishop will lead members of the parish for a walk-about through the neighborhoods and communities surrounding St. Michaels.



Together we will explore our neighborhood, assess needs, and look for potential opportunities for ministry in our community. The bishop has been doing these walk-about in parishes all over the diocese. They help members of the church see the community with new eyes and can be a real catalyst for growth in the parish. If you would like to join Bishop Bruce, please RSVP by e-mailing administrator@stmikessc.org. This will be a wonderful day of walking, exploring, reflecting, imagining, listening, and praying.

January Birthdays

Day	Name
1	Ethan Twardosz
1	Jonah Twardosz
1	Birdie Kammer
1	Kailey Smith
2	Holland Noel White
2	Tommy Gabel
4	Karen Holleman
4	Lily Peterson
12	Paul Reese
17	Thelma Osorio
18	Norma Johnson
18	Sara Cebulski
19	Bea Andrews
20	Jenni Hernandez
21	Larissa Farley
30	Anne Kelly

December Anniversaries

Day	Name
1	David & Lise Friedman

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. Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last

St. Michaels at the 2017 Diocesan Convention

By Steven Wright

The 122nd Annual Los Angeles Episcopal Diocesan Convention took place at the Ontario Convention Center on December 1-2, 2017. In attendance from St. Michaels as clergy delegates were the Rev. Daniel Justin, the Rev. Stephanie Wilson Brown, and the Rev. Patti Sells. Lay delegates were Children's Pastor and vestry member Amber Russo, Julie Bellevue-Smollar, and vestry member Steven Wright. Seated with the St. Michaels delegation were Stephanie's husband, the Rev. Greg Wilson and postulant Jamie Barnett.

If there was a single theme it would be this: Reconciliation. After the long-running controversies over St. James the Great in Newport and the eventual censure of Bishop Jon Bruno, nearly all speakers addressed the need to move forward in a new era of openness, reconciliation and forgiveness. Speakers, including retired Bishop Suffragan Chester Talton, Diocesan Bishop John Taylor, Bishop Suffragan Diane Bruce, Canon to the Ordinary Melissa McCarthy and outgoing president of the standing committee, the Rev. Rachel Nyback, stressed the need for the larger diocesan community to come together after recent events.

Full details of all convention business will be included in the Fall/Winter issue of the Episcopal news. Bishop John Taylor's and Diane Bruce's addresses can be found on their Facebook pages. Key resolutions adopted were:

Re-organization of Corporation Sole: This will continue the work of the special committee to bring greater transparency and accountability to Corporation Sole in regard to funds and real-estate holdings and to work toward making Corporation Sole act as more of an endowment for the diocese beyond its role as a diocesan corporation with the Bishop as sole trustee. Corporation Sole continues as an important source of funds for the diocese as shown by the fact that it will provide over \$500,000 in funding to make up the diocesan budget deficit for 2018.

Diocesan Youth and Young Adult Ministries Substitute Resolution: The original resolution called for every parish and mission to contribute \$600 each over two years to fund a study of the needs for youth ministry and development. The substitute resolution removed the funding request and to move forward using internal resources.

Title IV Process: Title IV was the process by which the dispute with St. James the Great was handled. Outgoing Standing committee president, the Rev. Rachel Nyback, made a heartfelt plea that one of the key provisions of this process requiring complete confidentiality on the part of diocesan respondents while claimants' proceeded with social media campaigns involving many in the diocese created a very difficult situation for the respondents and a lack of pastoral care on the part of the national church. A late addition to the slate, this resolution asks that the Standing Commission on Constitutional Canons at the 79th General Convention of the national Episcopal Church in 2018 to collect information and look at the process of Title IV and offer recommendations for changes at the 80th General Convention. Response and debate were passionate, with a final vote by order, first clergy than lay, and declared passed by both orders by Diocesan Bishop John Taylor.

Companion relationship with the Maori Anglican Diocese of Tairāwhiti in Aotearoa New Zealand: Passed by overwhelming acclamation.

A range of candidates were elected to various diocesan positions and organizations as well.

Full of singing and music, the convention brought together both joy and regret along with a spirit of forgiveness as the Diocese of Los Angeles lives into the future with hope and community in Christ.

From the Children's Pastor

By Amber Russo

Our third annual Christmas party that took place after the five o'clock Christmas Eve service was once again a huge success. Children played bingo and decorated cookies for Santa. There was delicious food, champagne, and apple cider. Many people snapped a fun family photo in the photo booth while others enjoyed the jolly Christmas music and joyful sounds of children laughing.

Thank you to all of our volunteers for making this event happen. It is truly a special night, and I hope we can make it a tradition we celebrate for many years to come.





HOLIDAY CHEER



Photos by Amber Russo and Denise Schwartz



The Calendar

January 2018

Sunday Schedule • Sunday Services are 8:00 am (no choir) and 10:30 am (with choir) in the Sanctuary.
• Rector's Bible Study begins at 9:15 in the Ministry Center
• Sunday School begins at 10:30 am.
• Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 am service.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Holy Name	2	3	4	5	6 The Epiphany
7 Epiphany 1 8:00 am Holy Eucharist (S) 9:15 am Rector's Bible Study (MC) 10:30 am Holy Eucharist 10:30 am Sunday School 11:30 am Coffee Hour (MC) 12:00 Youth Group Party (MC)	8 6:15 pm Book Discussion Group	9	10	11 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)	12	13 1:00 pm Concerned United Birthparents (FR)
14 Epiphany 2 8:00 am Holy Eucharist (S) 9:15 am Rector's Bible Study (MC) 10:30 am Holy Eucharist (S) 10:30 am Sunday School 11:30 am Coffee Hour (MC)	15 MLK Day	16 7:00 pm Finance Committee Meeting (CO)	17	18 Confession of St. Peter 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)	19	20
21 Epiphany 3 8:00 am Holy Eucharist (S) 9:15 am Rector's Bible Study (MC) 10:30 am Holy Eucharist 10:30 am Sunday School 11:30 am Annual Meeting and Potluck (MC)	22	23 7:00 pm Vestry (L)	24	25 Conversion of St. Paul 7:00 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)	26	27 9am Newcomer Breakfast
28 Epiphany 4 8:00 am Holy Eucharist (S) 9:15 am Adult Education (MC) 10:30 am Holy Eucharist (S) 10:30 am Sunday School 11:30 am Coffee Hour (MC) 11:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry (MC)	29	30	31	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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Alan Fields, *Treasurer*
Diane Ballowe, *Clerk*
Elizabeth Bartolomea
Karen Holleman
Meredith Reese
Amber Russo
Petra Sutter
Brooks Taylor
Steven Wright

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Vision Statement

To be a welcoming, inclusive Christian community growing in faith through worship, prayer, study, and social action.

Our Mission Priority

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