

St. Michael and All Angels Parish Profile

The parishioners at St. Michael and All Angeles are a warm and welcoming community, living out the teachings of the New Testament in the world today. A predominantly liberal group, we strongly support gay rights both inside and outside the church, strive for economic justice, believe in helping those less fortunate than ourselves, and act as stewards of the environment.

There is a mix of experienced Episcopalians, converts from other faiths, and those new to the church. There is an appreciation and love of the traditional liturgy as experienced at St. Mike's: thoughtful sermons, good music, and inclusive worship.

We are a small parish of about 317 communicants in good standing, 85 pledge units, and approximately 110 attendees per week in the pews. St. Mike's parishioners are active all week long with community outreach, peace and justice groups, and various small group meetings. We have members active in the Los Angeles Diocese and the interfaith community. Our facilities include an architecturally-recognized sanctuary, a large parish hall with a kitchen and stage, several buildings that include areas used for meetings and Sunday school and some that are leased by a local pre-school, and beautiful grounds, much of which is powered by recently installed solar panels. As a mission priority we are focusing on the United Nations' First Millennium Goal to eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.

St. Michael and All Angels is led by a strong group of lay leaders and The Rev. Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr., D.Min. , who has served as our Priest-in-Charge since December of 2007. Henry 's legacy to St. Mike's is an increased passion for and understanding of social justice issues, an appreciation for challenging and thought provoking sermons, an understanding of church dynamics, and of how to appropriately deal with conflict in the church. Both he and his wife, Treadwell, have been wonderful examples of what it means to be stewards.

"St. Michael and All Angels is a strong community of faith, welcoming people from all walks of life who seek to have a deeper relationship with God."

Anne Kelly, Senior Warden

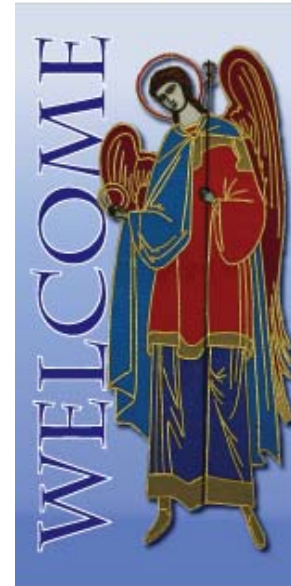
Vision for the parish

Our parishioners are enthusiastic about the present and the future of St. Mikes. When asked about visions for the future, we want to continue much of the good work currently being accomplished in the areas of social justice, outreach, and in being a welcoming community. The two areas in which we hope to grow with the assistance of a new priest are in bringing new members into the St. Mike's and in stabilizing our financial footing.

Vision for a new priest

We seek a priest that will welcome all God's children, continue to nurture lay leadership, preach sermons that energize and educate the parish, effectively deal with conflict, support the strong social justice orientation of St. Mike's, foster a sense of stewardship, grow the church, and help lead us towards fiscal stability.

ST. MICHAEL
AND
ALL ANGELS
EPISCOPAL CHURCH



A Brief History of St. Michael and All Angels

St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church started in the post World War II period during the surge of families to the San Fernando Valley with the purchase of the Valdez Riding Stables on Coldwater Canyon which became the first home of the new Episcopal mission in 1946 -- a fitting beginning.

According to a history marking the church's 25th anniversary, "The church members made all the furniture, pews, pulpit, prayer desk, altar hangings and light fixtures. They painted it inside and out." Thus lovingly renovated, the barn served as our first worship space.

The Rev. Edward McNair was the vicar of the new mission and in 1951 its first rector. During his tenure a rectory was built and in 1958 a new parish hall, which served as a temporary sanctuary as the old stable had become unsafe.

In 1959 the parish called its second rector, the Rev. Raymond Riebs, who came to St. Michael's from service as a missionary in Brazil. He led the parish into social justice ministry -- a new direction for the congregation and one that was not always comfortable. During his tenure, he founded a parish day school, a counseling center and a thrift shop.

In 1962 the present sanctuary was completed, a work of the noted Los Angeles architect A. Quincy Jones. The adjoining prayer and memorial gardens were added twenty years later. By the time Ray Riebs left in 1966 to resume missionary work, the physical plant had been developed to include buildings for offices and classrooms.

The third rector, the Rev. Weaver Stevens, a Jungian therapist, brought his skills as a reconciler and counselor to the parish in 1966. The principal focus of his 26-year ministry at St. Michael's was the interior life and spiritual development.

When Weaver Stevens retired in 1991, the Rev. Ellen Hill was unanimously elected the fourth rector, beginning her term in January 1993. The early years of her ministry were a period of transition as the parish community was called upon to examine itself and its priorities. Shortly after her arrival, the

former rector, Weaver Stevens, was accused of sexual misconduct during his tenure at St. Michael's, and the Rev. Hill led the parish through a healing process with both spiritual and professional assistance. During her 10-year tenure, the parish decided to close the thrift shop due to safety concerns, and to allow both the Coldwater Counseling Center and the parish day school to relocate. The school, now known as the Wesley School, and the counseling center continue to operate today, although without any affiliation with St.

Michael's. These changes caused a rift among some parishioners, and we lost several members. Over time the parish became revitalized. Both attendance and the pledge base grew significantly, as many newcomers were added to the congregation. New outreach ministries were developed, with an emphasis on hands-on involvement of parishioners and clergy.

"Looking for an Episcopal Church in my neighborhood, I was delighted to find one so beautiful architecturally and headed by a woman priest."

Parishioner of 17 years

After a period of transition while a national search was conducted, the Rev. John Capellaro was selected as rector in 2005. He encouraged the use of the dramatic arts in broadening our message to the larger community and created the first peace and justice committee on the Vestry. Reverend Capellaro hired a full-time Assistant Rector, Sarah Nichols, who focused on the youth of St. Mikes. He also hired a half-time music director, a part-time youth coordinator, and increased the office staff to two full-time people. Conflict and personal problems led to his resignation in February 2007, and Sarah Nichols left at this time as well. The Bishop appointed MaryIn Omernick as an interim, and she served until the fall, when she asked to be let go so that she could attend to issues related to her father's sudden death.

Thus when the Rev. Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr. came out of retirement from New Hampshire in December 2007 to assume the role of priest-in-charge, he was greeted by a troubled and traumatized community trying to deal with multiple losses and confusion. Under his wise and patient leadership, and in conjunction with the leadership of the Vestry, our community has come back together with a renewed sense of mission. Fiscal discipline has been restored, outreach programs have increased (thanks in no small part to the wholehearted support of his wife ,Treadwell Atkins, who has participated enthusiastically in all aspects of parish life), and a theologically-rooted emphasis on social justice has become an integral part of our identity in the community at large and within the Diocese of Los Angeles. We are, however, a significantly smaller community than in the fall of 2006.

As part of our path to greater fiscal reality, the assistant rector was not replaced, the youth coordinator position was eliminated, the music director position was reduced significantly, and more recently one of the full-time office staff was let go. In the interim, Reverend Atkins has fostered lay leadership as a means of continuing the good work of the church.

St. Michael's Today

Questionnaires and small and large group discussions helped us to produce this parish profile. Several themes persisted throughout, but the overwhelming message from all of this is that St. Mike's is a warm and welcoming community. Several crises over the past decades have impacted the parish, but what has held people together and allowed us to weather these crises has been a unique sense of community and purpose. We don't always agree, but we have learned to disagree with respect, honesty, and love.

Worship is at the heart of our life as a community. We gather together to praise God and to understand how and to what Jesus calls us, and our commitment calls us to follow the liturgy with events and dedication that help us to act out the Gospel in today's world. Many parishioners participate in small groups dedicated to outreach, social justice, fellowship, and actively participate in services.

The sermon is an important part of the worship experience for St. Mikes. The bar has been set high, and parishioners expect that a new priest will preach sermons that interpret the messages of the bible in historical context and with application to today's world. Sermons are recorded and posted on our website.

*"Great sermons-both strong
theologically and socially relevant."*

Parishioner of 5 years

The bulletin includes all the information necessary for the service. Although some parishioners feel that this makes the service much easier to follow, especially for newcomers, the negative aspect to this is that we are not as ecologically mindful when we print a 14-page booklet each Sunday. It also means

that we never use the Book of Common Prayer in the service, and thus have many parishioners who are completely unfamiliar with this important guide to the Episcopal church and prayer life.

Sunday Services

Sunday services are held at 8:00 am and 10:30 am. Worship at St. Michael's is both informal and traditional. The rector preaches and celebrates at both services, usually using Rite II. Lay readers and chalice bearers participate in both services. At the early service the rector and the deacon will lead the service – there is no music provided. The main service at 10:30 am is a choral Eucharist, at which the priest has the assistance of a minister of ceremonies, crucifer and acolytes.

The Music Program at St. Michael's consists of an adult choir, a Music Director, a quartet of professional singers, and an Organist. Music is an integral part of the 10:30 am Sunday service. (There is no music, however, at the 8:00 am service.) At a typical 10:30 am service five hymns are sung (Processional, Recessional, Sequence and two Communion hymns). There is also some Service music - a Kyrie or Gloria (depending upon the season), a Sanctus, and a Fraction Anthem. During the Offertory the choir sings an anthem.

The choir sings every Sunday from early September through early June, with the exceptions of the Sunday after Easter and the Sunday after Christmas; on those two Sundays, the vocal music is provided only by the organist and a cantor. On Christmas morning the vocal music has been provided by the professional quartet. During the summer, the music has consisted of the Organist and a cantor, or two, three, or all four of the professional singers, and, occasionally, the entire choir. In addition to singing on Sunday mornings, the full choir also sings on Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, and the Easter Vigil.

Children's Church takes place during the 10:30 am service. The children are with their parents during the first part of the service. During the Sequence Hymn, the children process out of the church with their teachers to have children's based Gospel and Sermon and Prayers of the people. The children return to the sanctuary at the Peace.

Special Services

Christmas Eve – We celebrate with two services, one at 5:00 pm, for families and the other at 10:00 pm. The early service offers a Christmas Pageant performed by the youth of St Michael's. At the 10:00 pm service the organist and adult choir provide music and hymns.

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper and Service – We hold one last party in the Parish Hall on the evening before Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. The men's group cooks the pancake and sausage supper. A simple liturgy prepares us to observe Lent.

Ash Wednesday and Lent - Lent begins with the imposition of ashes and the Eucharist on Ash Wednesday. Services are held at noon and 7:00 pm. During Lent, there is a Eucharist every Wednesday at 7:00 pm.

Palm Sunday – The 8:00 am and 10:30 am services include the Liturgy of the Palms.

“St. Michael’s truly is a loving and welcoming community of faith. I will never forget the tremendous outpouring of love and support from the congregation when Alex and I were married by Fr. Atkins last September.”

David Connors, Junior Warden

Maundy Thursday Agape Supper and Stripping of the Altar – We remember the Last Supper by celebrating the Eucharist in the Parish Hall, followed by an agape supper of bread, fruit, cheese and homemade soups. We then process to the Sanctuary for a ritual foot-washing and to observe the stripping of the altar by the Altar Guild. Members of the congregation sign-up for one-hour long shifts in an all night vigil, in the Sanctuary, that continues until noon of Good Friday.

Good Friday – The Stations of the Cross commemorate Jesus’ final journey to Mt. Calvary. At noon we gather for the Good Friday liturgy and to walk these 14 stations, which are set up throughout the sanctuary.

Easter Eve – We celebrate the Great Vigil of Easter at 7:30 pm. The Paschal candle is lit with new fire, our salvation history is recited in the lessons and the first Eucharist of Easter is celebrated.

Easter – We rejoice in the miracle of Christ’s Resurrection at 8:00 am and with a choral Eucharist at 10:30 am. In between services, there is a festive coffee hour and the children have an Easter egg hunt around the Parish grounds.

Summer Services – The schedule of special summer services varies from year to year. In past we have had services at a local park, followed by a parish picnic. Other times we have had service in the air-conditioned Parish Hall or on the grounds outside.

St. Michael’s Feast Day – On the Sunday of the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels we celebrate with a fellowship event following Sunday morning worship.

Blessing of the Animals – On a Sunday in early October nearest the Feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, members of the parish bring their pets of all shapes and sizes to the parish to be blessed. We have had this service in the Sanctuary and outside on the parish grounds. As the rector blesses the lively group of dogs, cats, birds, fish, lizards, rabbits and other pets, we recall Francis’s special relationship with all living things and his respect for our natural world.



Lessons and Carols – In recent years we have incorporated a Lessons and Carols service, although the format has varied from a full candle lit evensong service to a modified version on Sunday morning.

Lay Participation/Assistance in Worship

Approximately 1/3 of our church membership serves in one or more of the groups below.

Altar Guild – (11) The Altar Guild prepares the Sanctuary for all services. There are four teams, each with three to four people. There are 2 lay coordinators, one for weddings and one for funerals.

Ministers of Ceremony – (5) The MCs coordinate the acolytes and assist the priest at the 10:30 am service on Sundays and for special services including Christmas Eve, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Eve.

Lay Readers (21) and Chalice Bearers (15) – Lay readers and chalice bearers serve both early and late morning services, one each at 8:00 am and two each at 10:30 am.

Ushers - (23) The ushers serve the parish for all worship services. At the 8:00 am service one usher is needed. At the 10:30 am service we have four to five assigned. We have four teams to cover the four Sundays in a month – when we have five Sundays in a month, the youth become the ushers on the fifth Sunday.



Acolytes - (15) The young people in our program are led by an adult coordinator during the 10:30am service. Five serve every Sunday including special services – two servers, two torchs and one crucifer. One adult is assigned to the 8:00 am service. Attendance by our acolytes has been sporadic, as the organized youth sports culture and other commitments continue to take over Sunday morning.

Christian Education

Children and Youth - Our Sunday school classes meet from 9:30 am to 10:15 am each Sunday during a regular school year (September to June). Our volunteer teachers provide creative instruction into the Bible, the Episcopal Church and Christian living. This schedule allows our Sunday School teachers to attend services with the rest of the parish, but it does result in lower attendance in Sunday school by families that prefer to arrive at 10:30 am rather than 9:30 am.

Grades Pre-K through 3rd participate in Godly Play. This Montessori-based approach introduces children to parables, sacred stories, liturgical action and silence that are central to our religious tradition. Godly Play uses three main elements in each session – storytelling using visual components, reflection and then a feast.

The Junior High (grades 4-7) students explore sacred stories in their own lives, in the Bible, in history and through the eyes of people from various cultures. They use these stories to reflect on their own life histories and find the connection to their Christian faith.

The Senior High (grades 8-12) students learn about tolerance and non-violent resistance and how the youth of yesterday confronted injustices in the world around them. We apply what we learn to current events and how our children would respond to these inequalities – basically, would you do the right thing? Most of these discussions work in an open forum. Every other year we offer a confirmation class (once a month for seven months).

Sunday childcare is available in our nursery for infants and toddlers from 7:45 am to 12:15 pm.

Adults

Adult Forum - offered every Sunday from 9:30 am to 10:15 am in the Parish Hall. The first Sunday of each month the rector has conducted an Anglicanism class for those interested in learning more about the Episcopal Church and preparing for Baptism and Confirmation. The other Sundays offer a wide variety of topics and guest speakers from within and outside the parish.

Lenten Study group - offered by our Clergy Sunday afternoon during Lent.

The *Healing Prayer Gathering* - meets on the first and third Sunday after the 10:30 am service.

Prayer Shawl knitting group - meets the last Monday of each month 10:00 am and 7:00 pm.

Pastoral Care

St. Michael and All Angels has a very strong Pastoral Care program. We have a strong group of parishioners who are dedicated to meeting the needs of our members facing illness and other stresses of life. Our volunteers are well organized and available to meet needs as they arise. We also have a strong group of Lay Eucharistic Visitors who bring communion to those unable to attend our services. We have a Healing Prayer group which meets regularly to meet the special needs of parishioners and to offer prayer and support to those who serve in our many Pastoral Care programs.

The Pastoral Care program has extended beyond our parish and St Michael's is now one of the key parishes involved in the PRISM program, a restorative justice project providing chaplaincy throughout Los Angeles in jails and other settings

Music Program

The music program is run by the Music Director, a part-time position currently filled by Kristen Toedtman. It is highly regarded in the parish as a quality program that adds to the liturgy on Sunday mornings and special services.

Kristen administers the program, serves as the Choral Director and also serves as the Alto soloist/section leader. Emil Iliev serves as the Organist for the Sunday service and also as the accompanist for Choir rehearsals. The choir rehearses on Thursday evenings from 7:30-9:30 pm in the Choir Room. The choir has 17 singers on the roster. On a typical Sunday there are 12-14 singers. On Sunday mornings, the choir rehearses in the sanctuary from 9:30-10:20 am. In addition to the Director serving as an alto section leader and soloist, there are three professional soloist/section leaders (Soprano, Tenor, and Bass).



Prior to February 2005, St. Michael's had a fairly small music program. There was one person who served as both Organist and Choirmaster and the choir was fairly small. This had been in place for quite some time. In 2005, under Rector John Capellaro, the church hired a half-time Music Director who was given the task of increasing the size and scope of the music program.

The music budget quadrupled to around \$50,000. In Fall of 2005 a Children's Choir was formed and a Director hired for the St. Michael's Choristers. One year later, four professional singers were hired (a Soprano, an Alto, a Tenor, and a Bass). The adult choir did indeed grow and soon reached the size it is today, singing an offertory anthem, service music, and the psalm, which was usually an original composition by the music director. The music budget was increased once again by one-third to

approximately \$75,000. This large music program was in place through 2008 when, the parish needed to face large budget deficits. The Music Director's position was changed from half-time to quarter-time, effective January 2009. As a result, the director quit and Kristen (at the time the Alto soloist) was asked to direct the choir temporarily. Because Kristen was willing to take on the responsibilities of the Music Director and also remain as the Alto soloist/section leader, the church was able to have both a Music Director/Choral Director and a separate Organist. The choir has thrived under Kristen's leadership and she was offered the position permanently. Participation in choir has remained steady over the past eighteen months. Having replaced the sung psalm with the congregation reciting the psalm, the choir has been able to focus more on tone and technique than previously.

In January 2009 in conjunction with many other budget cuts in other areas of the church, the budget for paid professional singers was reduced from four to three positions. Graciously, our Tenor section leader and soloist, who is also a member of the church, agreed to donate his services for 2009 and 2010. The program budget has been substantially reduced both in 2009 and in 2010. Additional cuts for 2010 have meant that section leader and soloist positions are only funded through June 2010. The Children's Choir Director Position was also eliminated in January of 2010. The program had dwindled to where only a handful of children participated, and unfortunately it was one of the items we elected to give up in order to achieve greater financial responsibility.

Community Outreach

St Michael's is well known throughout the diocese for our extremely active community outreach. Our parish has been described as a "small but mighty" force with many important programs. Some of the many projects include:

Big Sunday - St. Michael's is a key participant in this city-wide effort to support community projects. Our focus on Big Sunday has been Soldier Care, offering soldiers who have returned from military service with major disabilities.



Get on the Bus - St Michael's has been a strong supporter of this diocesan effort to unite children with their mothers and fathers in prison. Children are able to "get on the bus" to visit their parent in prison at a time close to Mothers and Fathers Days.

Wig Project - One of the longest standing community outreach activities has been this project which collects and prepares thousands of wigs for distribution to women undergoing chemotherapy. One special event each year in providing wigs at Mujeres de Celebracion, a day long event supporting Latino women with cancer.

"St. Michael's and All Angels Episcopal Church is a welcoming, loving, justice seeking and creation-caring community of the faithful. St. Mike's has hosted several Valley Interfaith Council interfaith, social justice and environmental events. VIC is most grateful for St. Mike's continued support and activism on behalf of those most in need in the valley."

Rhetta Alexander, Vice-President of the Valley Interfaith Council

Angel Awards - a highlight of our year is an evening dinner program, the Angel Awards, where St. Michael's honors those in our community serving the poor, homeless and other underserved. Proceeds from the Angel Awards benefit one of our charities.

Holiday Cheer - at the end of each year we host a wonderful event at St. Michael's where over 100 children from area homeless shelters are hosted at our parish for a day of fun, food, care and complete with a visit from Santa! This event involves dozens of volunteers within and outside of our parish to provide this gift to these children. There is widespread participation in this event by parishioners and non-parishioners alike. We currently have several parishioners who first were introduced to St. Mike's by volunteering at this event.

Peace and Justice

St. Michael & All Angels continues to support the interfaith work of CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice), ICUJP (Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace), PCU (Progressive Christians Uniting), VIC (Valley Interfaith Council), and Integrity (an advocate for marriage equality and equal rights for lesbian, gay, and transgender people). Speakers from these organizations have provided programs for our Adult Ed Forums, keeping us informed of their current campaigns.

Father Atkins headed delegations calling on our Congressman Howard Berman to advocate, along with representatives of Bread for the World on the first occasion, for government aid to end world hunger and on the second, with representatives from the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, for a committee of inquiry to investigate government-sponsored torture since 9/11. Earlier in the year

St. Michael's hosted a program "Rethink Afghanistan," featuring the acclaimed documentary filmmaker Robert Greenwald. Over 100 people attended the event which was co-sponsored by ICUJP and Brave New Foundation.

"St. Michael and All Angels plays a very distinctive role in the greater Los Angeles community. There's real vitality at St. Mike's around cutting-edge issues like sustainability, stopping U.S.-sponsored torture, and embracing LGBT persons and families in both church and society."

*Rev. Peter Laarman
Executive Director
Progressive Christians Uniting*

"St. Michael's has been a congregation that treasures both the imperative to create a community of loving support for its members and also to reach out in compassion to those in need in Southern California and around the world."

George Regas

Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace

Our views on peace and social justice are proclaimed by what we do as well as by banners facing Coldwater Canyon. There is space for three topical banners in addition to the two St. Mike's banners. Usually the middle spot is reserved for announcing special services, such as Easter or Christmas. Other times it can advertise a special program. On either side of this banner have been two banners that indicate some of the values we hold. One is against CA Proposition 8, the proposition that reversed same-sex marriage in CA. The other proclaims an anti-torture stance.

Fellowship

New member incorporation – The committee for new member incorporation is chaired by one or two vestry members and the rector. New member incorporation is an important part of our ministry. At every service, visitors are encouraged to fill out pew cards telling us about themselves. A vestry member calls to welcome them and provide additional information about our community. A personal phone call or visit is then made by the rector. A few times a year, as soon as there is a critical mass of newcomers, we hold a new member dinner. These small gatherings, held at homes of parishioners, are the heart of the new member ministry at St. Michael's and include new members (some of whom have already joined the church and some who have been visiting the church), vestry members, and various members of the church who can provide information on activities the new members might be interested in (e.g., Sunday School, choir, etc). The rector attends all new member dinners, keeps contact with newcomers and works to integrate them quickly into the life of the parish.

St. Mike's is a welcoming place. We make efforts to get to know newcomers and make sure they feel welcome. Once they are in the door, people tell us they feel welcome. It is getting them in the door that can be difficult. In the past few years our banner program has brought several people in the door who were looking for a spiritual home congruent with their own social justice beliefs.

"I was told that it is an accepting place with a heart for social justice. It looks like what I was told was true"

Parishioner of a few months

Coffee Hour- Our weekly coffee hour follows the 10:30 am service in the Parish Hall. Volunteers provide coffee, tea, fruit, veggies and dip, bagels, cakes and other goodies. The children's table is stocked with juice and is where the young and not so young like to hang out. Once the children have filled themselves they run outside to burn off some needed energy at the playground.

Men's group- The men meet once a month for a potluck dinner at a parishioners' home. Fellowship is the key to the men's group. This group also cooks for special occasions, such as the Shrove Tuesday pancake supper, and grills burgers and hot dogs for several of our large outreach events: Soldier Care and Holiday Cheer.

Fourth Quarter- The Fourth Quarter is a lively group of "not only" seniors that has a lot of fun. They meet the first Friday of each month in the Parish Hall

Youth Group – Meets once a month. The rector and his wife have run the meeting and challenge the youth to help solve problems locally and worldwide.

Book Club – A group of parishioners meet bi-monthly to discuss a commonly read book alternating meeting space at various homes.

Lit Up – The outreach committee sponsors this monthly night of entertainment that is open to the entire community. Professional performers volunteer their time and talent with stand up comedy, dramatic readings, and musical performances that come mostly from outside the parish, but have a few parish stars as well. Money collected at the door goes towards different charitable organizations supported by St. Mikes.

Be The Village – This new group has focused on potluck dinners for families and singles to give us an opportunity to become closer outside the usual church events.

Dodger Night – Twice a year the St. Mike’s Dodger fans head to Dodger Stadium to root for the home team and have a few Dodger dogs.

Building and Grounds

Our property is fully paid for and is our greatest physical asset. Built in 1962 by renowned architect Quincy A. Jones, our sanctuary beckons with stately simplicity and is the spiritual and architectural center of two acres at the base of Coldwater Canyon. It is flanked by a memorial garden and a beautiful prayer garden with a waterfall fountain and statue of St. Francis; Sunnyside Preschool; two playground areas; an administrative office building; a building housing a nursery, two Sunday school rooms, youth lounge and a community outreach projects room; and a large Parish Hall with an industrial kitchen, a stage with lighting and sound equipment, and an informal parlor-like meeting room. We also have a



building shared with the preschool that includes the choir room, a meeting room, and room utilized by The North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry from which they operate an emergency hotline.

In 2001, the Rectory was sold to the adjacent Harvard Westlake School. Part of this agreement allows us to use the lower parking lot on Sunday morning, which is owned by them. The upper parking lot is shared with Sunnyside preschool and also has numbered spots available for Harvard Westlake students, staff and faculty.

There is a large open quad which is used for Parish events, Sunnyside events and daily games. For an eleven-week period in the summer, Destination Science Summer Camp also rents space. St. Mike’s and Sunnyside are currently discussing plans for new sod to be laid.

Other large projects undertaken during Father Atkins’ tenure include: a water line replaced in 2008, and a dangerous gas line replaced in 2009.

The biggest recent addition to the grounds is solar panels on the roof of Parish Hall. We activated our 5.6 kilowatt system at the 2009 annual meeting and subsequently in that year we prevented 14,587 lbs of Co2 from entering our atmosphere. This is roughly the emissions of about 767 gallons of gas used or 16 barrels of oil. We have produced 8,581 Kwh, worth \$1,287.15 (at roughly 15cents/kwh). In addition, despite LADWP rate increases, our electric bill was \$396 lower in ‘09 than in ‘08 and we used 15,000 kwh less than the previous year. Our system produces 24kwh a day.

“I came on Easter Sunday and was awed by the beauty of the church. It was the architecture, frankly, that drew me in. After that it was my desire to have my son grow up in church as I had.”

Parishioner of 5 years

Our efforts in Environmental Stewardship were acknowledged by California Interfaith Power and Light, who nominated St. Mikes, one of five religious organizations to be so honored, from 200 interfaith communities across the state for an "Energy Oscar". The inverter box is located directly outside the door by the front of the parish hall (door closest to the stage). It shows the amount saved in Co2 emissions, and how many kilowatts have been produced since the system has been turned on, for all to see.

Outside uses of the Facilities

Sunnyside Preschool - The Sunnyside Preschool is not a program run by St. Mikes. The school rents space that had for many years, since the removal of the St. Michael and All Angels School, been vacant and run down. In addition to providing some substantial income to St. Mike's and renovating and maintaining the space they use, they provide a sense of warmth and vitality to the grounds during the week.

Sunnyside Preschool started as a "Mommy and Me" group using a single room of St. Mike's campus six years ago. Three years ago, they became a full-fledged preschool with 90 students presently enrolled. The Sunnyside campus now includes two playground areas, an art pavilion, and one of the former school buildings which contain their offices, and six classrooms. They share use of the quad and parish hall. The teaching level ranges from "Mommy and Me" toddler groups to developmental kindergarten. Sarah Thomas is the Director. It is a well-respected preschool with a tuition of \$12,000 per year. Scholarships and financial aid are offered, including to members of St. Mikes.

Sarah and her husband Bob Thomas rally their teachers, students and parent community to contribute towards many of St. Mike's social outreach projects. Such examples include gathering teddy bears for the children of the "Get On the Bus" Program, and contributing Christmas presents for the families feted at Holiday Cheer. In the future, Bob and Sarah would like to involve their students on a more regular basis in our social outreach projects, both to support us and as a teaching opportunity for their young citizens.

The campus of St. Michael's has also benefitted from the relationship with Sunnyside. Sarah and Bob have spent close to \$400,000 on interior and exterior renovation since the "Mommy and Me" group officially became a school three years ago. Improvements this year alone have totaled \$23,000 and include: improvement of playground areas, additional play structures, installation of artificial grass, wood chips, water fountains, and fences, plumbing repairs, a new roof on the school building as well as replacement of air conditioning motors. Sunnyside paid us \$68,400 in rent in 2009.

Other property uses - The property is rented on a regular basis to other groups, netting St. Mike's an additional \$23,958 in 2009. We have many different groups on a regular basis including seven outside 12-step groups on a weekly basis and Destination Science summer camp annually. Duane Steadman, our office administrator, handles all rentals, including deposits, payments and insurance. St. Michael and All Angels would benefit greatly to have more active oversight in this area. As things are now, there is no janitor or facility manager on staff to oversee rental clients. Therefore we must carefully choose to whom we rent as they are handed a key and trusted to restore the space when finished, not damage or steal anything and to lock up when they are done. Our rental revenue has the potential to be increased under proper conditions. We also need to develop a clear policy on rental guide lines including delineations in rules between outside rentals and parishioner rentals.

Vestry

The Vestry consists of a Senior Warden, appointed annually by the Rector, and 12 elected parishioners. The Junior Warden is elected annually by the vestry from the vestry members. The clerk and the treasurer are also appointed by the rector, and need not be actual vestry members. Under Father Atkins, the Senior Warden has run the vestry meetings, a practice that has served us well. Although vestry members are not elected to fill a particular slot (e.g., an "outreach" vestry position), we do ask vestry members to serve as liaisons to certain committees and groups at St. Mike's in order to facilitate communication. This does not mean that the vestry liaison serves as a chair of that group, but rather as a member. An executive committee made up of the wardens, treasurer, and clerk meets independently and serves as an advisory committee to the Rector and makes the agenda for the vestry meeting.

The vestry has been particularly active in the past three years, especially during the time directly after John Capellaro's resignation, through the interim of Marilyn Omernick, and through Father Atkin's tenure. They have sought to be models of effective communication and pastoral care. Besides working to regain financial stability, recent work of the vestry has been to revise the parish by-laws to be in keeping with diocesan guidelines, creation of an alcohol policy, and in actively showing support for same-sex marriage by resolving that as long as the State of California forbade same-sex marriage, the clergy of Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church will not sign civil marriage certificates for any marriage so long as the right to marry is denied to same-sex couples. The vestry has decided that to actively participate in the discriminatory system of civil marriage is inconsistent with Jesus' call to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being. We will continue to perform the sacramental right of marriage to any couple, regardless of sexual orientation.

In sum, the Vestry is a vital part of the parish community and an excellent resource and source of support for the new Priest-in-Charge.

Office Staff

The office staff was increased to two full-time positions under Rev Capellaro, and then in 2010 due to budgetary considerations decreased back to one full-time administrator. Duane Steadman, now the sole administrator, holds much of the church's work together. He prepares much of the financial day-to-day work, coordinates much of the work with outside contractors, and is an expert at diocesan policy and practice. He is an indispensable asset at St. Mikes.

Finances

St. Mike's vestry approved a budget of \$467K for 2010, and projected a shortfall of \$110K. This represents progress for us, as in 2009 we ended with expenses of \$495K and a shortfall of \$139K, and 2009 was better than 2008. The difference between income and expenses has been made up from money the church received from selling the rectory and parking lot to Harvard Westlake. We know that this can only last a few more years and that some significant changes need to occur before then.

A look at the financial history of St. Mike's tells us several important things. One is that the pledge income has never been large and has not in recent history adequately supported the church. There have been supplements that kept St. Mike's from sinking, namely the former school and the sale of assets such as the parking lot and rectory. The second is that we ran through a great deal of money expanding the church during the tenure of John Capellaro. John was called here to expand the church,

and had done so using similar tactics at his previous church. By 2007, however, it was apparent that this approach was not working. When John left on an unrelated matter, economic realities were put on hold as we focused on rebuilding the faith community. Once Henry was here and stabilized our spiritual situation, we could again turn our task to the fiscal situation.

We have reduced the budget in 2010 to \$467K. This seems to be about as far cut down as we can take it. We look to new clergy leadership to work with us to become more fiscally balanced while still serving the needs of the congregation and the community.

Stewardship

Our understanding of stewardship has grown tremendously in the last few years, although the practical result has not necessarily met our needs. Stewardship, frankly, has not been a strong point at St. Mikes. As noted above, the church has tended to look outwardly for income rather than inwardly. Giving levels are all over the map, with some people giving significant pledges to operating the church, some in the middle range, some in the small range, and some, despite numerous inquiries, pledging no monetary support. In the last two years we have used the New Consecration Sunday program, which emphasizes giving back to God as opposed to giving to “keep the lights on.” We have seen increases in pledge amounts, but not substantial increases. The vestry committed to using the New Consecration Sunday program for three years, which means that after the program this fall we will re-evaluate the stewardship program.

Studio City, CA

Studio City is one of the first cities over the hill from Los Angeles into the San Fernando Valley, flanked by Sherman Oaks and Toluca Lake, and has an estimated population of approximately 37,000. Parishioners at St. Mike’s come from these towns as well as Van Nuys, Burbank, and others. Studio City is 78% white, has a median family income of about \$76,000, and has a high proportion of residents with college educations or higher. There is a broad mix of religious organizations in the area many of whom enjoy a rich interfaith relationship. St. Mike’s in particular is known as a leader in interfaith cooperation in the Valley.

As might be inferred from the name, Studio City is indeed a place where “the industry” makes its mark. Many of our parishioners are involved in the entertainment field in some fashion, and this contributes to an emphasis on the use of artistic expression at St. Mike’s. Unfortunately, the global economic downturn was preceded by a downturn in the entertainment industry in Los Angeles. Several of our parishioners were hit early on by the effects of the writer’s strike. Thus even before the global economic downturn, our fellow parishioners had to make difficult choices about finances which continue to this day.

Having sold our rectory, there is no residence provided by the church for the incoming priest-in-charge. The housing market here seems to be picking up, although a quick search will tell you that housing is very expensive in the area. There are very good public and private schools, wonderful shops and restaurants, and beautiful areas within minutes of the church where you can be hiking trails in state parks or contemplating the art at the Getty Center. In 45 minutes you could be in downtown Los Angeles at a play or concert, at the beach in Malibu, or riding Space Mountain at Disneyland. It is indeed a wonderfully diverse place

Final words

What do we want in a new priest? Our new priest can be a man or woman, gay or straight, single or married. What is of concern that this is a person who is passionate about proclaiming the Gospel through word and deed, and who has the maturity and experience to effectively deal with disparate views and help lead our parish into fiscal health. We want to grow to serve God and our community. This needs to be not growth for its own sake, but growth that is in harmony with the St. Mike's community as one that promotes social justice as Jesus would see us do.

You will find at St. Mike's a dedicated community of people who care deeply about our religious faith, living out that faith in the world, and helping each other along that pathway.

