



The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA
VOLUME 20, ISSUE 9 • November 2011

Love

By the Reverend Canon Mark Shier

Sermon given at St. Michael's on October 23.

Several years ago someone observed to me, and I could not quite tell if it was a complaint or a compliment, that I almost always preached on love. I was somewhat surprised, as I hadn't been aware of that myself. I reflected for a couple of days and asked some of my parish's folks and discovered that indeed what my friend had said was true: I almost always preach on love. I didn't quite know what to make of this discovery. On the one hand I didn't want to be the kind of priest who has only one sermon, repeated endlessly until the church is blessed with his retirement. On the other, I remembered one of my preaching professors in seminary saying that the good news of the gospel was infinitely rich, too much so for one person to comprehend it all, and that one invariably found one or two themes that informed almost everything that one would say. He said that a theme for a preacher was all right, as long as it revealed a facet of the infinite possibilities of our life with God and was not just the same old sermon dressed in different clothing. I'm still not exactly sure where I fall in this, boring repetition or unifying theme, but I have found that love is the thing that interests me most, in life, in spirituality, and in theology.

Why that would be I'm not quite sure. Perhaps because I have been the victim, as we all have, of a lot of bogus love, that is, selfishness masquerading as love. Perhaps it is because I am just very needy when it comes to being loved. Perhaps I'm just a very good example of the theologians' understanding that the primary way in which we humans are the image of God is in our loving, the love we receive and the love we give. I like to think that I have taken to heart several great passages of the Bible, most of them the words of Jesus. Today's reading is one of those: the greatest commandment is to love God; the second greatest commandment is to love our companions; the third greatest commandment is to love oneself (Matthew 22:37-39). Then there's the time when Jesus says that He

gives His followers only one commandment: "I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another." And the last one is that magnificent statement in the first of John's letters: "Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God,... for God is love." (1 John 4:7-8)



What it comes down to, I guess, is that love seems to me to be the most important thing in the universe, whether we are

contemplating the nature of God, which is love, or reflecting on the direction and energies of our own lives, which ought to be love, at least the way that Jesus sees things. What is the purpose of life? To learn how to love, so that we can live in heaven, in eternal life, where we are bathed constantly in the golden light of God's basic energy, love. How do we go about learning to love? By throwing ourselves into the midst of the effort, loving with as much strength as we can muster in ourselves and by inviting God to enable us by Her own strength to love even more. In other words, we use our own talents of love, however large or small they might be, and we trust to God's grace, to use church language, to take us to that level of loving we could never accomplish on our own. As we love in increasing degree, we become more like God, more holy, more capable of living in true joy, here and hereafter.

Love doesn't create itself. It can come only from love. We can love only after we have experienced being loved by someone else. That's why loving parents, loving families, loving partners, and loving friends are so important. It is from this love that we are made whole or complete and enabled to give love back out of ourselves. The tragedy, of course, is that many of us have been failed by these

important people in our lives. They who had a duty to love us have failed in that duty. That makes our ability to love more difficult— not impossible, just more difficult. The reason that it's not impossible is that the most humanly unloved person in the world is absolutely adored by God. God loves you and me and every human being passionately, just because we exist. In that same letter of John that we read from earlier, we hear this: "In this is [real] love, not that we loved God but that he loved us..." (4:10) If we can just catch a vision of that love and trust it, we are on our way to a successful life, a loving life, a loving eternal life. Forgiveness of those who have failed us can release us from their stultifying power, can free us from *their* failure, not our own.

Love is complex, as befits the most important energy in the universe. There are lots of different kinds of love: love for God, love for romantic partners, love for children, love for parents, love for friends, love for nation, love for beauty, love for life, love for the helpless and needy, even, when we get really good at it, love for the unlovely and hateful— the list is endless. Each of these is love and yet each is distinct from the others. Sometimes there is emotional attraction and sometimes not; emotion is not the heart of love but rather something else.

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Sermon *from page 1*

That something else, the one characteristic that all loves share, the one way we can tell real love from fraudulent love, is this: real love always wants the best for the beloved. Does the lover want and work for the benefit of the beloved? If not, the claimed love is phony, a tissue of words, not true and honest. And we then need to protect ourselves from the disloyalty of such a spurious love. We need to distance ourselves, we need to forgive, and we need to forget.

But always we must commit ourselves to real love. It is the elemental force of the universe, the very nature of God, the essence of being human, the way to be Christian, followers of the Christ who said, "Love one another as I have loved you; love God, and love your neighbor as you love your self."

The full text of Canon Shier's sermons at St. Michael's may be read at www.stmikessc.org/sermons_index.htm.

Thanksgiving for a Job Well Done

To: The Community Outreach Projects Committee for all their work on the Angel Awards Dinner benefitting My Friend's Place.

November Birthdays

Day	Name
5	Sean Grace
6	Paul Vaughan
10	Sandra Cuneo
11	Robert Perry
12	Sharon Renton
13	Jeanne Perry
17	Gus Helmink
18	Rafael Arias
20	Stephen Billington Andrea Odinov Fuller
22	Ed Napier
24	Marty Coho
25	Margaret Wedaa
27	Sarah Simon
28	Nancy Woods
29	Pablo Mooradian Amaya Washington

November Anniversaries

Day	Name
2	Meredith & Paul Reese
3	Ging Molera & Amador Rondilla
10	David & Melissa Basta
24	Louisa & Andre Herrmann

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.*

North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry Named Outstanding Volunteer Organization of The Year

The Greater San Fernando Valley Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals presents philanthropy awards to several individuals and organizations each year. The awards are presented in honor of National Philanthropy Day and recognize excellence in spirit and service being done within the community. Nominations go through a demanding examination by the Awards Committee. The choice is often a very difficult one because of the many individuals and organizations doing community service work in the Valley.

The Food Pantry shares this award with its eleven sponsoring congregations and its hundreds of volunteers. Volunteers from St. Michael's include Elizabeth Bartolomea, Liz Siegel Mullen, Amador Rondilla, Ging Molera, and Gail Green, plus all the folks who donate food and money to the Pantry.



As you do your weekly grocery shopping, remember these items that are always needed by the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry

*Canned fruit and vegetables.
Baby food in plastic jars.
Tuna.
Peanut butter in plastic jars.
Powdered milk in individual packets.
Individual size snacks.
Bags of dry beans and rice.
Plastic and paper shopping bags.
Diapers and feminine hygiene items.
Travel-size soap, toothpaste & disposable razors.
And money!*

Treasurer's Corner

September 2011—Revenue and Expense Summary

	September Actual	September Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenue	\$ 24,962	\$ 24,974	\$232,413	\$228,867
Total Expense	22,269	35,253	231,222	329,541
Net	\$ 2,693	(\$ 10,279)	\$ 1,191	(\$ 100,674)



As you know we have been searching for a Rector for the past 15 months. We're happy to announce that we believe we have found the person that God has in mind for us and are in the final stages of making a formal agreement.



We have interviewed many candidates and of all those we have talked with, we think this person is by far the best fit for St. Michael's.

Throughout this process David Connors said "God is preparing the right person, the time just isn't right yet." Those wise words turned out to be exactly right.

Last Monday the Search Committee met for several hours with the candidate; then Tuesday night the Vestry met with him; he met with the Bishop on Tuesday afternoon and then on Wednesday evening the Transition

Management Team and the Search Committee met with both Bishops Bruno and Glasspool and Joanna Satorius to discuss our situation.

On Thursday and Friday, the Vestry voted unanimously to call this candidate.

The candidate is originally from Los Angeles and is very eager to return. He knows many of the clergy in the diocese, has many friends and a support network here, all of whom are eager to welcome him back.

The Bishop knows this candidate, in fact he ordained him. Both he and Bishop Glasspool are very supportive of this candidate and our desire to call him.

We are now in the final stages of contacting references and determining a compensation package.

Until that process is complete, we won't be releasing the candidate's name or giving you more details about him.

Hopefully as soon as next week or the week after we will be able to do that.

We have discussed a start date of Monday, January 30, with his first worship service being February 5.

He would like to go through Christmas with his current parish and we would like to experience Christmas with Mark as we prepare to say goodbye to our wonderful spiritual mentor and guide, Father Mark, who has done so much for us over the past year.

Continue to keep us in your prayers as we conclude the calling process.

From Former Parishioner, Parish Administrator, and Now Priest, Peter Ackerman

I am sitting at my desk on October 12th, 2011, writing to you these words, letting you know how grateful I am for your helping me to discern my call to and lifting me up towards ordained ministry. Tonight is my "Celebration of a New Ministry" aka my "Installation" as the rector of St. Christopher's in Springfield, Virginia.

As I prepare for the presentations of gifts I look at the Prayer Book/Hymnal that I am finally going to retire. It is the same book presented to me by you, the congregation, on my final Sunday at St. Michael and All Angels on July 11, 2004. This book served me well in seminary; it has dark smudges over the Ash Wednesday pages, and has traveled with me into ordained ministry. It has been at churches and cathedrals for every service imaginable, it was the book I used as I presided over the last wedding, the last baptism, and the last Sunday service held at the Seminary Chapel before it burned down one year ago. The book has been at bedsides, the words therein helping to provide comfort to people as they got well, and for some who were sent on their way to the heavenly kingdom. The book has been on many occasions to preside over services at Arlington National Cemetery.



In short, this book has been on some adventures, as have I. Adventures that would not have been possible had you not opened your arms to a returning Episcopalian in 1993; adventures that would not have happened had you and the rector not seen "something" in me before I did; adventures that would not have been possible without your love and support. As I await the beginning of my installation, I just wanted to take a moment to say "thank you," and let you know, though the Prayer Book/Hymnal you gave me is being semi-retired (my daughter, Amy, asked if she could have it), the adventure that began with our journeys together, continues. Thank you. Thanks Be to God!

Grocery Workers Approve Contract

Agreement protects health care, pension, with moderate wage increases

In the previous newsletter we reported on efforts by Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) and by members of St. Michael's to support local grocery workers in their contract negotiations. As recommended by union leadership, the the grocery workers voted in September to approve their contract.

"This deal protects our members' health care and pension, and provides modest increases in wages," said Rick Icaza, president of the grocery workers union, UFCW Local 770. "This is a win for grocery workers, our communities, and our local economy. Without the unity and determination of our members, this deal would not have been possible. And without the unwavering support of consumers and the community, it would have been a much tougher fight. To those supporters, thank you," concluded Icaza.

Stewardship at St. Michael's

On several Sundays this fall, parishioners have shared their thoughts on stewardship. Here are two of those presentations.

Ging Molera

Good morning, I am Ging and I am here this morning to talk about stewardship.

In September 2008, Amador and I were driving to West Hollywood when he pointed out the banner in front of St. Mike's that read, "NO ON PROP 8." We were both curious and excited so we attended the 8:00 a.m. service the following Sunday. We have been attending ever since.



Raised Roman Catholic, I now consider St. Mike's my new spiritual home—a home that I take pride being a part of; a home that I embrace dearly and is close to my heart. St. Mike's is the first church to truly welcome me and that allows me to be true to myself. It is a warm, welcoming, and loving place where parishioners treat everyone with respect. It was with great honor that on May 16, 2010, I was received into the Episcopal Church.

I feel blessed and fortunate to have been asked to talk to you this morning about stewardship. It has granted me the opportunity to ask myself what the word "stewardship" really means to me.

Finance tends to be the key area that people refer to when speaking of stewardship. But personally, whenever I think about stewardship, there are 3 Ts that always cross my mind: TIME, TALENT, and TREASURE.

I think TREASURE or "money" is one of the most difficult subjects for people to speak about and to give. At least for me, that was the case. I was happy to share my abilities and offer my time and energy, but money? Money was not something that I was good at giving away. That is probably why God had to work on me for a long time to help me lose that attitude! And trust me, it is still in the works!

One of the things that really helped me was to admit the fact that I came into the world with nothing and would also leave with nothing. I started seeing my belongings as being "on loan" and this has helped me start to see myself more as a "steward" rather than as an "owner." Stewardship is not about the church needing money but the opportunity to give back and to support the church with a financial pledge.

Stewardship is not just about our financial pledge. It also involves committing our TIME and TALENT to the many opportunities here at St. Mike's that help us grow spiritually. There are a lot of opportunities to volunteer TIME and TALENT at St. Mike's. We have 12 Committees, namely:

- Adult Education
- Building and Grounds
- Children's Church/Godly Play
- Community Outreach
- Evangelism

See MOLERA, page 5

Meredith Reese

Hello. I'm Meredith and I am here this morning to introduce our Stewardship campaign here at St. Mike's for 2011.



Many of us by now have received the Stewardship committee's letter in the mail. We urge everyone this year to not focus on the need of the church to receive, but to concentrate on the need of each of us to give as part of our spiritual journey. During our transition time, balancing our spiritual journeys with our commitment to St. Mike's ministries is more important than ever.

The book of Second Corinthians tell us: "Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."—2 Corinthians 8:11-12. We will all have the opportunity to reflect on stewardship over the next couple weeks and be able to pledge as part of a special Sunday service on October 2.

Last year my husband was just my fiancé and we were relatively new members to St. Mike's. We attended Consecration Sunday—mostly for a catered lunch and were asked to pledge funds for St. Mike's coming fiscal year. We had just moved into a new apartment, anxiously planning our wedding, and trying to figure out our new combined income and monthly budgets. I was trying to figure out my church's motivations to ask for my promise. Was this in lieu of the offering plate? What did this all mean?

I first became involved in the ministry of St. Mike's when I joined the Social Action and Outreach committee and volunteered at the Holiday Cheer party and Solider Care program. Had my commitment to the social action groups not been enough? Isn't my time more valuable in God's eyes than a percentage of my paycheck?

I also asked just what is this church's intention in calling for financial stewardship of each member? Just what did financial stewardship entail? I feel blessed and fortunate to be able to speak to you today because I get another opportunity to examine the meaning of Stewardship.

Last year while preparing my Consecration Sunday speech, I read that the bible contains 26 direct references to the word "steward". The Old Testament recognized the Anglo-Saxon meaning of the word—a steward is a supervisor, a foreman—usually accountable to a king or ruler.

The New Testament introduces the word "stewardship"—from the Greek origin, which translates to mean the management of

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Angel Awards Dinner a Huge Success

by Jane Wilson

The sixth annual Angel awards dinner on September 10 was another great success as we celebrated honorees Camilla Brannstrom, Treadwell Atkins, Loretta Fox, Lauri Hendler, Steve Reizes, Ebbie Parker and Mia Falkenstein. We raised enormous funds for My Friend's Place.

First, thanks to all St. Michael's Community Outreach Projects Committee members that helped with the evening: David Rosenberg, Louisa Herrmann, Betsy Meiman, Betty Ferrell, Nancy Woods, Alex Morales, David Conners, Paul Reese, Meredith Reese, Blaire Chandler, and Gail Wright.

Thanks to these wonderful people that helped us plan and execute the event: Norma Johnson and Mary Ann Jacobson for the gorgeous table designs and Erin Ozar for the beautiful floral centerpieces. Thanks to Cynthia Mazza for all the appetizers, Dorinda Angelucci for PR help, donations and errands. Teresa Kiely Feldman, Jon Albert, William Hendley, David Conners, Alex Morales, Meredith Reese, Tim Wilson, Kristen Behrendt and Jim Earl for set-up help and kitchen service. Thanks to Meredith Reese, Paul Reese and Sarah Cook for help in cleaning up. Invitation

Design: Gary Lucy (art) and Duane Steadman (layout). Program Design: Pete Handelman. Technical Set-up: Hank Meiman. Thanks also to all our student volunteers: Avery Wright, Miranda Cornwell, Zofie Basta, Blue Bookhard and Stormie Bookhard.

Our generous silent auction donors: Winnie Holzman, Portrait of a Bookstore, Bradford Portraits, Meredith & Paul Reese, Karen Shaw, Marvel ArtWorks, Pargollia Boutique, Marcia Wilkie, Melissa Basta, Sarah David, Stephen Moore & Jimmy Doyle, Alexandria Books and Music, Avo's Bakery, Trader Joe's, Sweet Butter Kitchen, Virginia Classick, Boxers and Ballerinas, A2Z Productions NY/LA, Robano's in Toluca Lake and Pain Relief Center.

Thanks to Margie Mullen, Liz Mullen and Mullen Advisory for their continued generosity towards this event and every event SMCOP does! And a super duper thanks to Blaire Chandler for organizing and executing the silent auction; what a huge undertaking!



Camilla Brannstrom of My Friends Place



Treadwell Atkins and Betty Ferrell

Molera from page 4

- Liturgical/Worship/Altar Guild
- Music
- Parish Life
- Pastoral Care
- Peace and Justice
- Pre-school Liaison, and
- Revenue Generation

Presently, there are opportunities in Pastoral Care, Building and Grounds, and Altar Guild.

For Pastoral Care—We seek drivers and food coordinators for people who need food brought to their homes, For Building and Grounds—We seek gardening volunteers to work throughout the year; and, For Altar Guild—We seek 3 to 4 additional Altar Guild members and one volunteer to help bag and deliver food at the Food Pantry once a month.

It is a very personal choice to be a steward. I strongly encourage everyone to please choose to be a steward rather than just a member here at St. Mike's.

Let us all ask ourselves, "What is our role in the church at large?" Also, instead of asking what and how much the church needs to receive from us, let us ask ourselves, "What is God calling us to give?"..."What is God calling us to give?"

Reese from page 4

a household. Stewardship appears in the context of servants in the house and also means a trustee. Like so much of my interpretation of the scriptures this illustration of the servant/master relationship is a tricky, but a valuable analogy to God's church and its people. The apostle calls himself the steward of the church, implying his role to the church at large.

That is what you and I must think about in the weeks to come. What is my role in the church at large? And like the Corinthians scripture, how can I finish the good work with the means that I have? It would be silly to say my contributions solely keep the wheels at St. Mike's moving—I'm just one member in a large congregation; I'm just one modest pledge.

Instead I will remember my answers from previous years' Consecration Sunday. I will continue to question, and after a couple weeks of thought and prayer, and discussing it over with my husband, Paul, I can say to you today the central issue of

financial stewardship is not the church needing my money, but the opportunity to give and back it up with a promise. That promise is my pledge for the whole year.

Giving not just dollars, but my time and my patience, brings me closer to the meaning of joy. I try to focus on my spiritual growth with God in this church. Giving sends me to that focused spot as nothing else can.

This is what St. Mike's annual stewardship program is all about. It is a very personal question to ask what I think God is calling on me to give—and not what I think the church needs to receive. It is a very personal choice to become a steward, not merely a member, of St. Mike's.

These are personal, but also effective questions that give each of us an opportunity to grow spiritually and help the ministries in our St. Mike's community. I believe the willingness to do God's work is in all of us. Now we only have to ask, what is the acceptable amount to give.

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interfaith
food
pantry



*A Family Service -
Children Are Welcome!!*



Wednesday, Nov. 23rd, 7:30 pm

The North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry presents the
27th Annual

Interfaith Service of Thanksgiving “Embracing the New and Still Serving”

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church
6020 Radford Avenue, North Hollywood
Info: 818.761.6124**

**DONATIONS OF STAPLE FOODS
AND MONEY ARE WELCOME
visit us at: www.NHIFP.org**

This service is wheelchair accessible

***Suggested Food Donation:
Canned Tuna, Canned Chicken,
Beans (pinto, navy, etc.), Peanut Butter***



The Calendar

November 2011

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

Locations:
 CO: Church Office
 CR: Choir Room
 MR: Music Room
 FR: Fireside Room
 PH: Parish Hall
 UR: Upper Room
 YL: Youth Lounge
 S: Sanctuary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 All Saints' Day	2 All Souls' Day	3 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (MR)	4 12:00 noon Fourth Quarter Luncheon (CO)	5
6 All Saints' Day Observed Daylight Savings Time ends 12:15 Healing Prayer Group (FR) 12:15 PM SMCOP (YL)	7 6:15 PM Book Discussion Group	8 7:00 PM Finance Committee (CO)	9	10	11 Veterans' Day Parish Office Closed	12 8:00 PM Lit.Up! (PH)
13 Pentecost 22 (Proper 28)	14	15 7:00 PM Vestry (UR)	16	17 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (MR)	18	19
20 Pentecost Last (Proper 29) 12:15 Healing Prayer Group (FR)	21	22	23 7:30 PM Interfaith Thanksgiving Service (Emmanuel Lutheran Church)	24 Thanksgiving Day Parish Office Closed	25 Parish Office Closed	26
27 Advent 1	28 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Group (YL) 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Group (YL)	29	30 Saint Andrew the Apostle			

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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.