



# The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA  
VOLUME 18, ISSUE 7 • August 2009

## Our Educational Vocation *by the Reverend Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr., D.Min.*

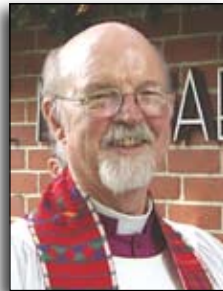
Chaucer says of the English Friar in his *Canterbury Tales* "that gladly would he learn and gladly teach." As a Christian community we have the ongoing vocation of both learning and teaching. Jesus took very seriously the vocation of teaching. The church, in fact, gave birth to what is today the university.

As we approach the Fall season, having seen what William Faulkner called "that certain light in August", most parish churches begin to focus on the start-up of the new church school year. A lot of what we do in the field of Christian Education is focused on the young. In our own parish we have such programs as "Children's Church" and "Godly Play," but adult education is also important in the Christian community. Our Sunday morning Adult Forum is a very important part of our Christian Education program at St. Michael and All Angels.

The clergy have a special responsibility in relation to teaching in the Christian church. Like the good friar in the *Canterbury Tales* the clergy are called to both "gladly learn and gladly teach". Those who teach our children, both lay and clerical, have taken on a critical role in the life of our parish and we should always be grateful for such teachers. However, we are all called to the teaching vocation in the Christian community. Godparents, for example, take vows that they will be responsible for the Christian Education of their Godchildren. In our daily lives we all have moments when people ask us such questions as "What does your church teach about who goes to heaven?" Or "What does your church teach about fighting in a war?" Such questions offer us teachable moments.

The vocation of teaching has several functions in the Christian community, for example in the collect for Proper 8 in the *Book of Common Prayer* we pray that through the teachings of the Apostles and prophets we may "be joined together in unity of Spirit" and made

collectively "a holy temple acceptable to God." In the collect for the feast day of St. Peter and St. Paul we pray that through the teaching of the Apostles we "may ever stand firm upon the one Foundation, which is Jesus Christ our Lord..." Teaching leads to unity of spirit, becoming a community that moves toward holiness and it grounds us in our true foundation, the truth made manifest in Jesus the Christ.



There is another important function of teaching that we in the Christian community often overlook. Teaching at its best helps us to "decode" our world. One of my mentors was a Brazilian educator named Paulo Freire. Freire loved to tell

a story about one of his early literacy classes in Brazil. He had just walked into his classroom and the group of men in this literacy class continued to talk. In a short while, one of the men noticed him and apologized for talking in his presence. Freire, at this point, asked this group of very poor men why they apologized for talking in his presence. One of the men stood up and said that they had apologized for talking in his presence because he knew more than they did.

Paulo Freire then asked them why he knew more than they did. One man responded by saying that Freire knew more because he had been to school and they had not. Freire then asked why had he been able to go to school and they had not. There was a brief period of silence and then someone said, "because your parents had the money to send you and our parents did not." Freire responded by asking why his parents had money and their parents did not. There was a somewhat longer silence and then one of the men said, "because that was the will of God."

At this point, Freire asked the men another question and told a story. He asked the men how many had children. One of the men had ten children. Addressing this man he told a story about a man who had ten children and had decided to take all the resources he had to send one of them to the university so that one could become a professional and live a life free of poverty, even though it meant that the other nine would have almost nothing and most likely several of them would die of starvation.

Freire then asked the father of the ten children whether he would do this. The father responded at once by saying no. Freire next said, "Well, if you as a father have a concern for the well being of all your children do you not think that your Father in heaven has the same concern?" He then asked again, "Why did my parents have money and your parents did not?"

*continued on next page*

### In This Issue

Fr. Atkins' Message.....	1
From the Vestry .....	2
Marriage Resolution .....	3
Treasurer's Corner .....	3
General Convention .....	4
Calendar .....	6
Goings On.....	7
Community Outreach Projects .....	8
Get On The Bus.....	9
Bioneers .....	10
Music .....	11
Be The Village .....	11

continued from previous page

There was a very long silence and then one of the men said, "Because of the owners of the haciendas (landed estates). The owners never paid fair wages to our parents."

In this moment these men were able to see clearly a major part of their own historical reality. These men, moving out of their silence and fatalism, were now able to speak a word that named their reality and were now better prepared to decode that reality.

Freire taught the entire group to read and write within six weeks by having them write a letter to the owner of the haciendas where their parents had worked. All of our educational programs at St. Michael and All Angels hopefully will help us to become a people grounded in the love and truth we see in Jesus the Christ, and a people better able to decode our reality so that we may more readily participate in God's ongoing transformation of the world.

*Pax, The Rev. Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr.*



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## From the Vestry

*Betty Ferrell, Senior Warden; John Pryor, Junior Warden*

Subsequent to a month-long period of comment by members of St. Mike's, in the July meeting your Vestry unanimously approved the Marriage Resolution that is reprinted in the newsletter on page 2 (previous page).

In considering this resolution we were influenced by several factors. Back in April when Bishop Robinson visited St. Mike's he spoke to us about his support for blessing same and opposite-sex marriages in the church but removing the business of signing civil marriage certificates. He supports this practice, followed by several other countries, as it separates the civil and religious functions of marriage. In our June meeting, the Vestry learned that the Vestry of All Saints Church, Pasadena, had enacted a similar resolution. Finally, it was the unanimous conviction of the Vestry that we needed to take a stand against discrimination perpetrated by the State of California in who could and could not be married in the eyes of the law.

In the last year, half of the marriages performed at St. Mike's were same-sex marriages. The Vestry realized that not having clergy sign the civil marriage documents would mean another step in the process for opposite-sex couples, we also realized that it was a step that our same-sex couples were not even allowed to take. This,

we reasoned, would be a small price to pay if it illustrated our commitment against state-sanctioned discrimination.

The Vestry also adopted an alcohol policy for the campus of St. Michael and All Angels. This policy (available in the church office) states that the consumption of alcoholic beverages is not permitted at St. Mike's except with the permission of the Rector and in compliance with several easily accomplished safeguards against underage drinking and over-consumption by individuals. This policy was prompted by both a need to comply with our insurance company's request and in order to ensure the safety of our community.

In other Vestry news, we welcomed Preston Fray to fulfill the unexpired term of Robin Tarnoff, while we also acknowledged the resignation of Glenn Sunness from the Vestry for personal reasons.

Finally, we wanted to also recognize Father Atkins for his remarkable presence and stamina at the General Convention of the Episcopal Church that took place this month in Anaheim and wish him well upon his upcoming vacation!

*Betty Ferrell, Senior Warden  
John H. Pryor, Jr., Junior Warden*

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### **St. Michael's Vestry Welcomes Preston Fray as Its Newest Member**

Preston recently retired from the Participation Accounting Department at Sony Pictures Entertainment in Culver City. He started working in the entertainment business for Columbia Pictures in Washington D.C. in 1976 and subsequently moved to California from Virginia in 1981. His education includes a BA degree from Randolph-Macon College and a MA in Journalism from the University of South Carolina. His interests include Civil War history and classic automobiles.

He began attending St. Michael's in 1991, finding the sanctuary a wonderful place to worship, preferring the "early bird" service. With the passing of his friend Henry Larsen, Preston assumed Henry's spot as an usher for the 8am service.

In October, 2003, he married Kaye Bence back in Virginia at Christ Church, a small Episcopal church in Brandy Station. Today they make their home with their dogs in Burbank.

# St. Michael's Adopts Resolution in Support of Gay/Lesbian Marriage

The following statement was included in a press release dated July 22, 2009:

*In protest against California's Proposition 8, which amended the state constitution to state "only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California," the Vestry of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, unanimously voted to approve a resolution in support of the rights of all people, straight or gay, to legally marry in the State of California. The clergy of St. Michael's parish will continue to bless heterosexual, gay, and lesbian marriages, but will not sign state-issued marriage licenses until all people have the right to marry in the state of California.*

*This action was influenced strongly by a visit to St. Michael and All Angels this spring from V. Gene Robinson, Bishop of New Hampshire. During a discussion at St. Mike's, Bishop Robinson supported churches getting out of the civil marriage busi-*

*ness and instead performing blessings for all marriages, same or opposite sex. A similar action was taken by the Vestry of All Saints Church, Pasadena, California.*

*The Reverend Canon Dr. Henry Atkins, Priest-in-Charge at St. Michael's, said "This community strongly believes that both gay and straight couples should be equally blessed in the sacrament of marriage, and we happily commit ourselves to doing so. But we will not participate in state-sanctioned discrimination." He noted that other countries, such as France, also separate the legal from the religious marriage ceremonies.*

*"The church is no place for such discrimination," said John Pryor, Junior Warden of St. Michael's. "A welcoming community holds the door open for all people," he stated, "we should not be in the business of shutting that door."*

*Copies of the resolution are available on the parish website at [www.stmikessc.org](http://www.stmikessc.org) or call 818-763-9193 for more information.*

## MARRIAGE RESOLUTION

*Adopted by the Vestry of St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, July 21, 2009*

WHEREAS, on November 4, 2008, a majority of the California electorate voted to approve Proposition 8, which amended the California Constitution to state "[o]nly marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California;"

WHEREAS, on May 26, 2009, the California Supreme Court voted to uphold the constitutionality of Proposition 8, a decision which not only deprives same-sex couples of the fundamental right to marry, but, in the words of dissenting Justice Carlos Moreno, "places at risk the state constitutional rights of all disfavored minorities";

WHEREAS, the institution of civil marriage in the State of California is, as a result of Proposition 8 and the Court's decision, a constitutionally-mandated instrument of discrimination, which furthers injustice and denies same-sex couples the fundamental dignities to which each human being is entitled;

WHEREAS, our active participation 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; and

WHEREAS, Saint Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church is called to make the sacrament of marriage equally available to all couples, regardless of their sexual orientation;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rector, Wardens and Vestry do declare that the sacramental right of marriage is available to all couples, but that 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.



### Treasurer's Corner *by Margie Mullen, Treasurer* *June, 2009 – Revenues and Expense Summary*

	<i>June Actual</i>	<i>June Budget</i>	<i>YTD Actual</i>	<i>YTD Budget</i>
Total Revenues:	\$25,345	\$30,596	\$160,241	\$186,006
Total Expenses:	\$32,136	\$39,840	\$229,842	\$268,240
Net Total:	(\$6,791)	(\$9,244)	(\$69,601)	(\$82,234)

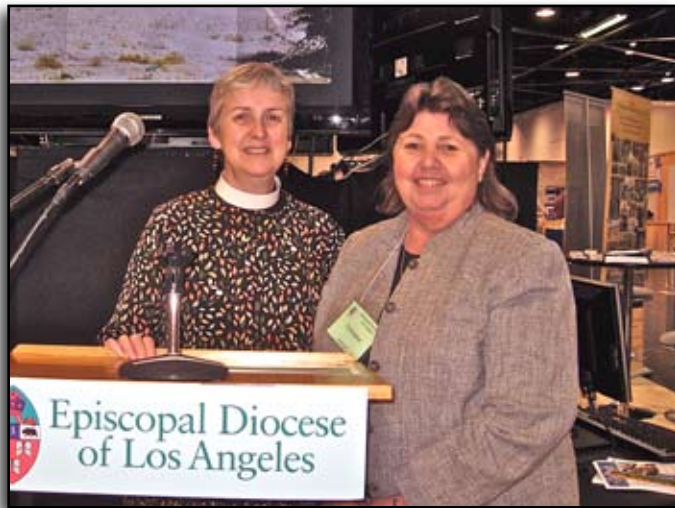
We continue to remain on track and in line with our year-to-date Net Total vs. our Budgeted Total, mainly because our actual expenses are less than projected. Our pledge payments and plate income continue to be lagging, but by only (14.5%) and in this economy and compared to other parishes, this is excellent and we appreciate your support in these trying times.

# St. Michael's at General Convention

## *Family Torn by War Finds New Hope in Los Angeles, Says Refugee Service Director*

*(Article attributed to General Convention Morning Briefing, July 11, 2009. Courtesy of Episcopal News Service.)*

The Interfaith Refugee and Immigration Service Resettlement Service, a ministry of the Diocese of Los Angeles, is a haven to those who typically have nowhere else to go, according to the Rev. Catherine Wagar, interim executive director.



*(pictured above: Catherine Wagar and Debbie Decker)*

She was the featured speaker at the July 10 "L.A. Midday," a series of presentations highlighting ministries of the Diocese of Los Angeles at the 76th General Convention in Anaheim.

Indicating images of the Holy Family and their flight to Egypt on a screen behind her, Wagar reminded the gathering that "Jesus himself was a refugee," and like present-day refugees, forced to give up nearly everything in the hope of beginning a safe and new life.

IRIS expects to resettle about 1,300 people fleeing religious and other persecution this year, primarily from Iran, according to the Rev. Catherine Wagar, interim director.

The agency receives \$900 per refugee, of which half is dispersed directly to the family upon arrival. A majority of IRIS's funding comes via contracts with the U.S. Department of State, through three national affiliates, the Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) and Church World Service (CWS), she told the gathering.

She shared the story of a staff member, Zorik Yeghikian, whose father left the family home in Iran on December 24, 2000 to buy gifts and a Christmas tree. He was never seen alive again.

Yeghikian, now an IRIS staff case worker, was at Friday's gathering and asked Wagar to share his story, she said.

She told those attending that eventually, Yeghikian and his family learned that two soldiers killed his father because they wanted to sell his car to pay for a party. They were apprehended, convicted, but received a reduced sentence because Yeghikian and his family are Christian, religious minorities in Iran.

Fearing for their own lives, his family began their own flight for safety. It took five years, but eventually they arrived in Los Angeles, sponsored by a relative living here. IRIS's support didn't end there; they helped the family begin their lives again, offering such tangible support as finding a place to live and linking the family to employment services and ESL classes.

Deborah Stein and the Rev. John Denaro were among those attending the gathering. Ms. Stein is the Director, and Rev. Denaro is the program officer for church sponsorship and media development, for the Episcopal Migration Ministries, a national affiliate agency which works with the U.S. State Department to resettle refugees via IRIS and some 30 offices in 26 dioceses throughout the country.

IRIS's work has been adversely affected by recent economic fluctuations. It is particularly difficult to help newly resettled families find employment and affordable housing, Rev. Wagar said. In addition, she noted that local relatives who have been assisting arriving family members are increasingly pressed to supply household items, transportation, and rent assistance.

But she added that congregations and individuals can help support the newly-resettled. For more information about IRIS, visit their website at [www.iris-la.org](http://www.iris-la.org). IRIS welcomes the help of volunteers and parishes, "without whom", she said, "IRIS's work would be impossible."

## *Bishop Bruno Blesses Disney Hotel Protesters at Afternoon Prayer Vigil*

*(Article reprinted from General Convention Morning Briefing, July 15, 2009. By Pat McCaughan, courtesy of Episcopal News Service.)*

Los Angeles bishops excused themselves from the July 14 House of Bishops afternoon legislative session to take to the streets along with other convention deputies, visitors and guests, in solidarity with thousands of local hotel workers struggling for economic justice and to earn a living wage.

Bishops Jon Bruno, Sergio Carranza and Chet Talton of Los Angeles joined those who gathered outside the Anaheim Convention Center where the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church is meeting through July 17.

Recalling walking with civil rights legends Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Caesar Chavez, Bruno said: "We continue to walk with Justice for Janitors in Los Angeles."

"We're now marching here" with Disney workers, asking for the rights and privileges "they deserve as human beings," he said. Bruno blessed the workers, adding: "Let us turn the eyes of Disney toward justice, mercy, benefits, the things necessary for people to live a just and abundant life.



(Pictured: Father Atkins, Bishop Bruno, Bishop Gene Robinson, and Bishop Sergio Carranza, speaking at the Vigil. Photo by Jim DeLa/Episcopal News Service)

"I pray that we as religious leaders may be faithful to your mission to bring justice and mercy for all people and to respect the dignity of all human beings," Bruno told vigil organizers.

The afternoon vigil was organized by Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE), the Economic Justice Network of the Episcopal Church, the Peace and Justice Commission of the Diocese of Los Angeles and Local 11 of UNITE HERE, a Los Angeles-based union that includes hotel and restaurant workers.



(Pictured: Bishop Robinson leading the march. Photo by Jim DeLa/Episcopal News Service)

Ada Briceno of UNITE HERE said local hotel employees had been working without a contract since February 2008. Disney wants to replace the union-funded health plan with a corporate plan, she said, which in time would cost a minimum-wage worker about \$500 a month for insurance for a family.

"These are low-paid workers, making on average about \$11 an hour," she said.

"We want to welcome you and remind you that everybody who's cleaning your rooms, who's preparing your food are doing it so this place is profitable but in the same manner we want to make sure the workers can feed their families and take care of their families," Briceno told the gathering.

She said the Disney Corporation is attempting to reduce health care and other benefits, despite CEO Robert Iger's \$27 million salary, "about \$73,000 a day," she told the gathering. "If Disney succeeds in doing this, in a few short years you'll see that those workers are going to pay about \$500 a month, which means that at that time workers will have to choose whether to pay the mortgage, feed their families or have health care for their children. This is a choice no mother or father should have to make. These hardworking family members are here to make this county and this city grow."

She said that some of the workers have served at Disney for as many as 25 years and are the "driving force behind the success and tourism industry here in Anaheim. They've built what Disney has become today and it would not run—this engine would not run without them."



(Pictured: Deacon Catherine Wagar enthusiastically joined in the march. (Photo by Treadwell Atkins)

Bishop Gene Robinson of New Hampshire also addressed the gathering, recalling a youthful visit to the famous theme park. "Little did I know that what it took to keep Main Street beautiful was countless workers behind the scenes.

Comparing Disneyland and even the country to the Oscar Wilde story *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, "where the man sells his soul so his body stays beautiful and young while the portrait of him gets old and diseased and ugly," Robinson said, "It looks beautiful at first, but when you go back and open the closet, there is decay and there is corruption and there is injustice, that makes all of that beauty happen.

"This cannot happen in this country where all of us deserve a fair wage for a good day's work. We deserve health care."



# The Calendar

August, 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<b>2</b> Welcome to the Rev. Dick Belliss Women's Care Cottage Clothing Collection 9:00 AM Men's Group Morning Prayer 12:15 PM Healing Prayer (FR)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 7:30 PM Community Outreach Projects Committee (UR)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> 12:00 NOON Fourth Quarter (CO)	<b>1</b>  <b>8</b> 8:00 PM Lit.UP! (PH)	
<b>9</b> Welcome to the Rev. Dick Belliss	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 7:00 PM Finance Committee (CO)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO)	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 2:00 PM Sunnyside Preschool Multi- Cultural Fair (All St. Michael's parishioners are welcome.)	
<b>16</b> 12:15 PM Healing Prayer (FR)	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO) 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting (UR)  <i>September '09 Newsletter Articles DUE</i>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 5:30 PM Be the Village Potluck (see article p. 11)	
<b>23</b> 12:30 PM Sunday School Teachers Meeting (FR)	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO)	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	
<b>30</b> Welcome to the Rev. Julian Bull	<b>31</b> 10:00 AM & 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Knitting Groups (FR) (Tentative)	<p>Sunday Services are 8:00 AM (no choir) and 10:30 AM (with choir) in the Sanctuary. Sunday School (Godly Play, Youth, and Adult Forums) begin for all ages at 9:30 am. (First Sunday 9/13)</p> <p>Children's Church begins at 10:30 in the Purple Room and the children are brought into Eucharist for the Peace. (First Sunday 9/13) Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 AM service unless otherwise noted.</p>				<p><i>Locations:</i> CO: Church Office CR: Choir Room FR: Fireside Room PH: Parish Hall UR: Upper Room YL: Youth Lounge S: Sanctuary</p>	

# GOINGS ON AT ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH

## Thanksgiving for a Job Well Done

To: **Kristen Toedtman:** *for her wonderful talent and her leadership as St. Michael's Director of Music. The choir has never sounded better!*

*The next time you see Kristen, please give her heartfelt thanks for her contributions.*

*In the months that follow, the Vestry will continue to recognize the gifts of work and time that help keep St. Michael's a beautiful and useful campus, and a thriving parish.*

## Always-Needed Food Pantry Items

*Canned fruit and vegetables.*

*Baby food in plastic jars.*

*Tuna.*

*Peanut butter in plastic jars.*

*Powdered milk in individual packets.*

*Individual size snacks.*

*Plastic and paper shopping bags.*

*Diapers and feminine hygiene items.*

*Travel-size soap, toothpaste & disposable razors.*

*And money!*

**September 2009 MIKE Deadline:** Please send copy and/or pictures via e-mail to [lauren@stmikessc.org](mailto:lauren@stmikessc.org) by Tuesday, August 18. If you don't have a computer, bring your articles to the Parish Office by that time.

## Quotation for August

*"If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one."  
Mother Teresa (August 26, 1910–September 5, 1997)*

Read the MIKE Online! All you do is go to the website, [www.stmikessc.org](http://www.stmikessc.org), and click on "THE MIKE ONLINE." Back issues are available there as well. And while you're at the web site, you can shop at Amazon.com through its link. St. Mike's gets a small rebate for each purchase made through this link.

## August Birthdays

Day	Name
3	Alex Morales
9	Denise Schwartz Father Atkins
10	Brianna Bendall
13	Annabel Haddock
16	Elizabeth Bartolomea Bob Postma
17	Ethan Friedman
19	McKenna Van Horn
20	Preston Lucy
21	Malcolm Bull
25	McLain Beaulieu
27	Robin Prybil Clinton Leupp Monie Wright
28	Ryan Prybil
29	Len Thompson Sage Van Horn
31	Johan Agerbeek Betsy Hailey

## August Anniversaries

Day	Name
4	Andrea & Tom Worrall
14	Joan & Cliff Dektar

**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 ([lauren@stmikessc.org](mailto:lauren@stmikessc.org)) to let us know. *Please Note: Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month.*

## And did you know?

It was reported at the July Vestry meeting that we are beginning to see some savings on our electric bill since our solar panels were installed. Since turning the system on at our Annual Meeting on January 25, 2009, we have accrued a net savings of \$368 compared to the same period last year, which has offset our increased bill for water!

Stay tuned for more exciting programs and projects here at St. Michael's!

# St. Michael's Community Outreach Projects

By Jane Wilson, Committee Chair

## HELLO AND THANKS!

The first half of 2009 has been so amazing for Outreach and the second half promises to be equally amazing and BUSY. I so hope you will somehow get involved in all the great events we have planned between now and the end of the year. Special thanks go out to Nancy Woods for overseeing GET ON THE BUS, Louisa Herrmann for overseeing the WIG EXCHANGE events and David Rosenberg for overseeing not only SOLDIERCARE but also our BIG SUNDAY event.

## LIT UP!

August 8, 2009, this month's theme is "Los Angeles, I'm Yours" and performers include Steve Hibbert (SNL), Mary Lynn Rajsckub ("Chloe" from 24), Blaine Capatch, Ebbie Parker, Jen Kirkman (writer for CHELSEA LATELY) and St. Mike's own Jane Mason. Music will be provided by Michael Oosterom and Zachary Barton. The box office will be going to SCHOOL ON WHEELS. Founded by Agnes Stevens in 1993, School on Wheels is a non-profit organization that provides volunteer one-on-one tutoring for homeless kids (K-12th grade) throughout Southern California. In addition to weekly tutoring and mentoring, every student receives a new backpack, school supplies and school enrollment assistance. As usual we provide free childcare, delicious snacks and an amazing show! (Look for a full-sized version of the flyer on the St. Mike's website: <http://www.stmikessc.org>.)

## ANGEL AWARDS DINNER

The 4th Annual Angel Award dinner will be held on Saturday, September 12th, 2009. Each year SMCOP honors outstanding achievement in the Los Angeles outreach community with this special award and ceremony. This year the award will be going to two people, the Reverend Dennis Gibbs for his outstanding service in prison outreach ministry and Sally Martinez, a city caseworker who does citizen-advocacy work that is above and beyond! We will also be honoring as our Angel Emeritus, Soni Wright, who was so instrumental in organizing and growing the Wig Exchange as well as all the programs that we do with SMCOP. Finally we will be honoring our "Seraphim and Cherubim", stellar volunteers that help SMCOP achieve all we do each year; they are Ellen Harrigan, Jennifer MacLean, Daniel Frank, and Danielle Koenig. Tickets to the dinner are \$75 and include a cocktail hour, the dinner & ceremony, wonderful entertainment, a silent auction filled with great items, and dancing at the end of the evening. Invitations will be mailed around August 10th and will also be available in the back of the church.

If you'd like to join the planning committee, please contact Jane Wilson at 818-343-8438 or e-mail her at either [project@stmikessc.org](mailto:project@stmikessc.org) or [superqueerjane@yahoo.com](mailto:superqueerjane@yahoo.com). We still need help with PR, mailing invitations, organizing the silent auction, the kitchen, set-up, the dinner service and many other things.

Also, the following are items needed for donation to the Angel Award Dinner:

1. Silent Auction items: Dinners for two, studio/show taping experiences, signed scripts, books, crafts, goodie baskets, store gift certificates, etc
2. Bottles of wine.
3. Food store gift certificates.
4. Party store gift certificates.
5. Stamps
6. Donations/discounts from party supply rentals
7. Printing supplies
8. Cash donations

## JOIN SMCOP

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, August 4, at 7:30 p.m. in the Upper Room. We need you now more than ever. For further info please contact Jane Wilson at 818-343-8438 or email [project@stmikessc.org](mailto:project@stmikessc.org) or [superqueerjane@yahoo.com](mailto:superqueerjane@yahoo.com).

## A Special Note

If you are reading a copy of THE MIKE in BLACK and WHITE, you may want to see the pictures in COLOR. Go to <http://www.stmikessc.org>. Click on "THE MIKE" ONLINE in the left hand column and select the August, 2009 issue.



## St. Michael's GET ON THE BUS Program

By Adam LoCascio and Nancy Woods

At 3:30 a.m. on June 19th, before the sun had come up, people gathered at St. Michael's to "Get

on the Bus." It was time for the annual program that takes families to see their loved ones incarcerated in California prisons. Many hadn't seen each other for many years due to being transferred hundreds of miles away. The St. Michael's bus was bound for Soledad, and after a brief tire change, it was on its way.

It was about a five-hour journey to the prison, helped along by overhead screens linked to a DVD player. Once at the prison, the families went to their designated facility, either North or Central. The prisoners eagerly awaited the entry of their loved ones, often ducking down to get a better look at the arriving crowds. A staff member said that the "Get on the Bus" event and Christmas were the two best days of the year for the inmates.

They had to sign up for the June event all the way back in December.

The day offered food and entertainment. Pizza and cookies were served while a magician entertained the kids by making rabbits appear and disappear. There was even a photo studio set up to allow the prisoners and families to take pictures that they could take with them. The visit lasted about three hours and a gloom descended over the place when it was time to say final goodbyes and go.

Afterwards at a church in Soledad there was a short reception where the families were able to discuss their experiences with each other and have a bit more to eat. It was the last stop on the trip before taking the long five-hour drive back to Studio City. However, there was one surprise left. As the families reentered the bus, a teddy bear with a letter from their parent was waiting for each child. Some even had beautiful drawings done on card stock. The kids were thrilled.

Overall, it was a very rewarding experience for the families, prisoners. The fam-

ilies seemed to enjoy themselves, and the prisoners were positively ecstatic. Although short-lived, it was a very happy time in a decidedly unhappy place. It was a pleasure to be a part of it.

A special thanks to all who help make this day a magical one for the children and their dads. Diana Benjamin, Adam LoCascio and Jenifer Schmutz helped with logistical details for the trip and then rode the bus with the children and moms. It was a very long day for them (18 hours!). Catherine Wagar and Jane Wilson brought special food for breakfast. Treadwell Atkins, Diana Benjamin, Kelly Freis, Mary Ann Jacobson, Ricki Sawyer, Jenifer Schmutz and Nancy Woods made home visits to the families coordinating paperwork and keeping in contact until the night before the trip. Avery Wright and Denise Schwartz donated many, many bears for the children both on our bus and other children visiting the prison. Thanks to the many who donated food items for the trip and all the members of the parish who supported this important outreach event.

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## Teddy Bears for Get On The Bus *by Avery Wright*

For three weeks in May my school, Immaculate Heart, collected teddy bears for the program Get On The Bus. When I first heard about the program I wanted to help as much as I could. My Mom had the idea of collecting teddy bears at my school. I loved her idea and started on it right away. First I had to okay it with my principal. Once I had done that I had spring break to organize everything for the drive. The first thing I had to do was find out how long the drive would last at my school. Once I figured out that it would go on for three weeks, everything else fell into place. I made fliers for each of the teacher's classrooms so kids would see it often; I created announcements to be said over our speakers, and with the help of some classmates we made posters to hang up in the school hallway.

After spring break was over the drive began. The section (group of classes) that brought in the most bears would win a free dress day, where they didn't have to wear uniforms. Each classroom had a tally sheet to keep track of how many bears they brought in. In the morning I would go around to each classroom counting how many teddy bears people brought in and also making sure that people didn't forget to record it if they brought any in. My religion teacher, Mrs. Rucker, was a big help. She said to her students, "If you bring in a teddy bear

you don't have to do your religion homework for the week." She did this almost every week, for which I was very grateful because it got us a lot more teddy bears than we would have ended up with.

Every few days I would make an announcement about when the drive ended and the rules about only teddy bears that are ten to fourteen inches tall. The drive went by really quickly and at the end we ended up with more than 200 bears. The only difficult part was fitting all those bears into my carpool's car. I was very happy I helped with this drive. It put a smile on my face that each of our teddy bears are going to be held and loved by children who needed them for support. (Photo courtesy of Bill Wright)



# The BIONEERS are Coming!

We hope you'll all come to our **FIRST** meeting of the Fall – September 2, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. (Find a **FULL SIZED** version of this flyer (at right) on our website! <http://www.stmikessc.org>.)

## Summer Activities at St. Michael's

If you've been away for the summer, we missed you, for sure! Here are some photographic memories of this summer's activities. Photos courtesy of Treadwell Atkins.



Above: Bruce Rankin, Katie Bull, Father Atkins join guests at CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice) luncheon (May 21, 2009)



Left: Newly-Baptized Sofia Aurora and Sarah Joan Kastak-Carrillo with their parents Jose Carrillo and Bill Kastak (July 14, 2009)

Below: Father Atkins with Anne Kelly assisting, baptizing Benjamin Frank Baklayan-D'Ambra (May 31, 2009)



Above: GO DODGERS! This is just a handful of the THIRTY St. Michaelites at Dodger Stadium Jun 18, 2009.

Live Simply  
so THAT Others can Simply Live



an evening with

**Ed Begley, Jr.**

**Wednesday, September 2  
at 7pm**

presented by **Bioneers SFV**  
Inspiration for change. Education for action.

in the parish hall of  
St. Michael and All Angels Church  
3646 Coldwater Canyon Ave  
Studio city 91604-4062

park in upper lot (free)LH turn onto  
Avenida del Sol from Coldwater, and  
immediate left into the lot.

admission free



Star of HGTV's "Living with Ed," this accomplished actor and activist's message on sustainable living includes:

How he began his 39-year eco-journey in 1970, including humorous stories about his first electric car and his first attempt at composting

"Everything I have done for the 'environment' has also been good for my 'pocketbook'"

"Start with the little things – you don't "run" up Mt. Everest!"

The success in California to clean up the smog – it didn't hurt business...the economy thrived!

Global climate change, pollution, dependency on Mid-East oil – these are "challenges" that can be overcome!

Products and services that he has used that work!

"Our planet is an asset with value – let's not treat it like a "going-out-of-business" sale!"

# St. Michael's Music Program Gearing Up for Fall

By Kristen Toedtman, Director of Music

## Summer Greetings!

While we're enjoying these hot days, I wanted to give a report from the music department to keep you all in the loop about the latest from the choir loft. First of all, I am happy to announce that we have finally found an organist! Emil Iliev played for us on June 14th and those that were here that day surely enjoyed his playing. We decided shortly after that it seemed like a good fit all around. He will join us officially on September 6th, one week before our choir sings again from the loft.

In the meantime, Jah Koo has been gracious enough to stay with us the entire summer when Andrew Rosenblum could not, and I, for one, have really enjoyed her presence. Her last service with us will be August 30th.

Andrew has been traveling, studying music around the world and will join us so that we can thank him properly on the first two Sundays of August. He has told me how very much his time with us at St. Michael's has meant to him and that he hopes to keep coming around, at the very least to learn a thing or two about composing for organ from Emil. I want to thank all of you for your continued patience in this unexpected transition process this year. I'm happy to say we've been making music the whole way through.

And I must say I've been hearing the congregation making quite a bit more noise, too (sure, the choir's sitting out there during the summer months, but still) ... which brings me to my next point ... **Choir!**

On September 13th, the choir will gather again to start our season. Ready to start singing with us? After service that Sunday, at 12:15, we'll have an informal meeting for anyone interested in joining the choir. All current choir members are invited and encouraged to come—the more the merrier! We'll sing through some hymns, maybe a favorite anthem, and do some vocal exercises. We'll also discuss the schedule for both the adult choir and the choristers. That means parents of children who'd like to sing this year should surely come. We won't make anyone sing who doesn't want to. But ... who doesn't want to?

As always, feel free to contact me with any questions you may have, and have a wonderful August! You can e-mail Kristen at [kristentoedtman@gmail.com](mailto:kristentoedtman@gmail.com).



## A Little About Emil Iliev, Our New Organist

A native of Bulgaria, Emil Iliev began piano instruction at the age of six. He graduated from the School of Music in Russe, and continued his instruction at the Academy of Music in Sofia.

Mr. Iliev has appeared in many concerts and recitals in Bulgaria, Belgium, Holland, Germany, and the US. He has appeared as a soloist with the Shumen Symphony

Orchestra, performing Prokofiev's First Piano Concerto in Madara Cave in Shumen, Bulgaria. He also performed an all-Chopin concert at Leiden University in Holland. In 2005 Mr. Iliev had his debut in Benaroya Hall in Seattle, performing with the Northwest Symphony.

Mr. Iliev has extensive competition experience. After winning the Ibla International Competition in Ragusa, Italy, he received a scholarship to the North Carolina School of the Arts (NCSA) where he completed his Master of Music. Upon graduation from NCSA, Mr. Iliev accomplished three years of Doctoral studies at the University of Colorado-Boulder. Please be sure to welcome Emil to St. Michael's.

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## Be the Village by Margie Mullen

The "village people," as David Connors so aptly named us, had their most recent gathering in late June at Katie and Julian Bull's house. What a great evening! The kids were splashing away in the pool, playing with the Bulls' ample pool toys, while the adults had a very amiable and relaxed social time, sipping refreshments and enjoying the potluck, either gathered around the patio table or off in smaller groups elsewhere.

Be the Village was founded in early 2009 and gets together, hopefully, but not strictly, every two months. We meet in private homes, bringing our own drinks and food. Although we are forming a nucleus of regular attendees, there is no membership and anyone can come every time, once in a while or just once to see if they like it. It's really just hanging out with St. Michael's people, young and older, kids or no kids, gay or straight, getting to know each other a little bit better and talking about what ever comes up. Sometimes we have a semi-formal 20 minute voluntary discussion on a specific topic, sometimes not. You can see that this is not highly structured, but merely to serve as an excuse to have a good time.

Be the Village meets again Saturday, August 22nd, at 5:30 p.m. at the home of Karen Rogers and John Pryor. Reservations are needed so that potluck assignments can be organized. It will be a pool party again, so be sure to bring the kids of all ages. If the kids want to bring a friend, bring a friend. If you want to bring a friend, bring a friend. We just need an actual headcount at least a few days ahead of the 22nd. There is no cost.

Watch the This Week at St. Michael's Friday emails or the Sunday bulletin, for the exact location, soon to be announced. (There will be no lifeguard, so parents, keep your eyeballs on the little ones.) Please e-mail Margie Mullen at home [mullen@gmail.com](mailto:mullen@gmail.com) or call in the evening at 818-487-7189 to let us know you are coming, how many adults and kids and help coordinate what needs to be brought.

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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.*