



# The Mike

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

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## Blessed Are the Meek

By the Reverend Canon Mark Shier

Sermon given at St. Michael's on November 7, 2010

The old woman shuffled out of the darkness into the circle of pale light cast by the street lamp. She moved slowly and painfully, and, it seemed, a bit confusedly. The cold wind fluttered the rags hanging on her frail frame. She was grateful that, at least for now, the snow had stopped falling. She squinted around her and then, filled with new purpose, limped to a dark alley just outside the circle of light. The alley was out of the wind, and the snow had not yet piled into it. She sighed gratefully onto the ground behind a dumpster, relishing the seeming warmth of the protected patch. With another sigh she closed her eyes and soon was gently snoring. As the hours passed, the snoring grew softer, her breaths grew lighter, her heart slowed, and at last she was as cold as the air around her. They found her the next morning, a tear frozen on her cheek, (Revelation 7:17) but smiling peacefully, just as if all were well....

When the old woman awoke, she was at first confused. She was on a street, as she had been for years, but it was no street that she had ever seen before. The pavement shone and glowed as if it were burnished gold. (Revelation 21:18) She stood before a grand house whose very stones and doorposts and window ledges and roof beams twinkled with light as if reflected by precious stones: jasper and sapphire and agate and emerald and carnelian and amethyst. (Revelation 21:19) There was no sun in the sky but everywhere was suffused with a soft warm glow that made a sun superfluous. (Revelation 21:23) The street, though empty, seemed only momentarily so, as if no place were empty and no place lonely. There seemed a presence in the air; the street and the great house seemed poised, waiting for something, something good and marvelous and thrilling.

The door in front of her was open and she could hear the murmur of conversations punctuated by shouts of laughter. The door beckoned to her and she walked through, down a long hallway with light and sound growing with each step until she stood in a huge room filled

with all manner of people. (Revelation 7:9) All were young and vibrant, excitedly talking and laughing as if they had all the time in the world. The room was filled with the aromas of mounds of food sitting on the tables around which they sat. Every once in awhile, someone



would jump up, run out of the room, and return with more food which he would then offer to all around him before he once again took his place. There was such a sense of ease about the place, as if everyone knew they belonged, and there was no anxiety or fear or aloneness. Some seemed quietly shy and yet quite at home in such a great crowd. All were dressed sumptuously in white robes of a rich cloth trimmed in gold and set off with ties and wraps and scarves and belts of brilliant but soft color. (Revelation 7:9) The robes sat softly on plump, firm flesh, and flowed around their figures with grace and delicacy.

The woman gaped, unnerved by a sense of wealth and fullness that was alien to anything she had ever experienced. Stunned, she took a step back and only then felt the strangeness in herself. She looked down on the same white robe that the throng was wearing. Her skin was as healthy and glowing as everyone else's and on her fingers and wrists were rings and bracelets that sparkled and winked at her, as if filled with a secret they could hardly wait to impart. The woman moved into the room, just to the edge, as if in a dream. She came to a table with an empty chair and unselfconsciously sat in it. Everyone there seemed to take her for granted, nodded, and smiled.

Just as the man next to her was about to say something, a gentle quiet washed across the room. Everyone turned and looked at what seemed the head of the room. Only then did the woman notice a large table with some empty chairs. The quiet was occasioned by the entrance of a handsome, smiling man with

a humorous glint in his eye, a man everyone seemed to know. And he knew them. His face glowed with recognition and pleasure as he looked around the room. Then his eye fell on the woman and he stopped in mid-stride. The woman flinched unconsciously, remembering all the times she had been rejected and thrown out of rooms and parties and towns, all the times she had been told she didn't belong, all the times she was too dirty, too ragged, too strange.

The man raced to her and stopped dead in front of her. His eyes glinted with pleasure and his voice boomed out in greeting, "Alice! At last you're here. Now the party can really begin." (Isaiah 43:1) Alice looked at him, still dazed, by the unexpected warmth of this man and this place.

Then he looked around and said, "But why are you sitting here?" (Alice flinched again.) "No, no, no, come up to the main table. That's your place today." (Luke 14:7-11) With that he took her hand (she noticed that his was terribly scarred as if once brutally wounded) and led her to the empty chair to the right of the simple wooden chair that clearly was the head of the table—and of the banquet hall. He sat himself in the wooden chair and motioned for her to sit in the one next to him.

Shyly, but with a firm resolve that surprised even her, she shook her head. "Oh, sir," she finally

See BLESSED, page 2

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

|                                        |   |
|----------------------------------------|---|
| Sermon from a Visiting Priest.....     | 1 |
| Birthdays & Anniversaries .....        | 2 |
| Treasurer's Corner.....                | 2 |
| From the Vestry.....                   | 3 |
| Community Partners.....                | 3 |
| Calendar.....                          | 5 |
| Book Sales to Benefit SoldierCare..... | 7 |

found her voice, "oh no, I don't belong there. Please let me stay but I can go to the place that better befits me in the far corner."

The man laughed uproariously, but Alice didn't feel offended. He wasn't laughing at her. He seemed to enjoy an inner delight in her presence.

"Oh, but you are mistaken," he said. "This is precisely where you belong. We all take turns sitting here at the main table with me and my mother." With that he motioned to a beautiful, serene, smiling woman sitting at his other side. "The newest come among us is always here in the place of honor, and, Alice, you are the newest and the most honorable among us today."

With that, Alice sat, more out of surprise than anything else. Quicker than she could grasp, the person next to her got up and ran out, to return in a few seconds with a glass of sparkling liquid and a place setting of chased silver highlighted with gold. He seemed to take great pleasure in setting them before her and then taking his place again. She noticed that everyone else was furnished in the same way, except for the man who was their host. He seemed to prefer a clay plate and a pewter mug.

The man with the scarred hands (she could see that the other one was scarred, too) said, "Oh, here I am failing as a host. I haven't introduced you to your table. Everyone, listen up. This is Alice, our newest member. Alice, this is my mother, Mary. You can ask anything of her and you're bound to get it. She's wonderful. And the man next to you is Judas, a good friend with whom I once had a great struggle. Next to him is Pilate, who finds greater power here than he ever did before. On the other side is Caiaphas, who now understands what is truly important. We're having a sort of old home week today with these good friends. But there are others. Next to Caiaphas is Elaine, just lately arrived. And next to her is Ted. They came in together, hand in hand skipping across the fields behind the house. The woman Ted is talking so earnestly to is Theresa. Her friends from the slums of earth are at that table over there. Oh, and over there is the Dalai Lama, all hundreds of incarnations of him."

By this time, Alice's head was swimming, and her confusion must have been evident. The man stopped and said, "Oh you'll get to know them all. We're here celebrating forever."

Shyly Alice took her courage in hand and asked, "And your name?"

The man smiled hugely and replied, "Oh, I have lots of names, and I answer to all of

them, especially if a banquet is in the making. I'm called the lamb, the light, the gate, the shepherd, the word, the son, the shekinah, the avatar, the lord, the anointed one, wisdom, love. The name I like best is savior, Jesus in my earthly language. But you can call me anything you wish." The smile got broader.

Alice's confusion was only a little lessened. She asked, "But why am I here? This is such a grand group and I am such a nobody. How have I come to be here?"

Savior looked at her in surprise and said, "Don't you know that you belong here? Let me use the words I did in Galilee: 'Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven,...' (Matthew 5:12) Besides, I love you dearly. There are other reasons you belong here, but let these do for today."

With that, Alice trusted Savior and believed him. She relaxed into her chair and turned to Judas to begin a conversation that would never end. Amen.

*The full text of Canon Shier's sermons at St. Michael's may be read at [www.stmikessc.org/sermons\\_index.htm](http://www.stmikessc.org/sermons_index.htm).*

## December Birthdays

| Day | Name                               |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| 1   | Mary Ann Jacobson<br>Hallie Walker |
| 7   | Jon Freis                          |
| 9   | Stormie Bookhard                   |
| 14  | Anna Magers                        |
| 15  | Laz Meiman                         |
| 17  | Jenifer Schmutz                    |
| 19  | Preston Fray<br>Willie Pryor       |
| 21  | Phyllis Bracey                     |
| 23  | Meg Pryor                          |
| 25  | Amy Byrd<br>Matthew Aukee          |
| 28  | Avery Wright                       |
| 29  | Cliff Dektar<br>Ed Sugar           |

## December Anniversaries

| Day | Name                  |
|-----|-----------------------|
| 10  | Jay & Marjie Hathaway |
| 28  | Wesley & Barbara King |

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

## Thanksgiving for a Job Well Done

To: Our generous Coffee Hour Hosts. These are the people who come early on Sunday morning, make coffee, bring wonderful refreshments and then stick around to clean up. And, they are not reimbursed for any of their expenses. And, their efforts help us to maintain the sense of community that is so special here at St. Michael's. So the next time you see Hallie Walker, Maria Aukee, Lise Friedman, Norma Johnson, Mary Ann Jacobson, David and Suzanne Rosenberg, Charlotte Oliver, Katie Bull, Karen Rogers and Meg Pryor, Julie Quinlan, Melissa and David Basta, Ed and Diane Collins, Elaine Robertson, Leslie Chapman Rose and members of the Vestry, just say thanks!

*Please give these individuals heartfelt thanks for their 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.*

## Treasurer's Corner

### October 2010—Revenue and Expense Summary

|               | October Actual | October Budget | YTD Actual  | YTD Budget  |
|---------------|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Revenue | \$ 27,488      | \$ 28,254      | \$282,550   | \$297,243   |
| Total Expense | 32,314         | 45,510         | 330,574     | 388,535     |
| Net           | (\$ 4,826)     | (\$ 17,256)    | (\$ 48,024) | (\$ 91,292) |



## From the Vestry

*Anne Kelly, Senior Warden  
David Connors, Junior Warden*



**W**e would like to wish you all a very peaceful and reflective Advent. During this time we prepare and await the coming of Jesus' birth. Our parish is also in an Advent period as we are preparing for the arrival of a new Rector.

The search/discernment process has constantly been moving forward. The committee conducted an extensive phone interview with each candidate and then decided to proceed with personal interviews. The committee then met each candidate in person for further discussion, discernment, and prayer. It is expected that soon a candidate will be brought to Vestry.

It is very likely that we will know who God has called to be our next Rector by Christmas. What a wonderful Christmas blessing for all of us!

We will continue to keep you informed as we continue to move forward by means of weekly announcements in both worship services, these newsletter articles and responding to your questions. We ask you to continue to keep our parish and these candidates in your prayers as we together complete the process of discerning our next Rector.

Meanwhile, as we prepare for Christmas we still have many joyous celebrations

here at St. Michaels. The choir has prepared special music for Advent and Christmas. The Adult Forums continue with the sharing of our spiritual journeys. We have already heard from a number of individuals and families and these stories are fascinating to hear. Our outreach committee has Holiday Cheer planned for Saturday, December 11, and we are trying to complete our photo directory and expect to have that by mid-December.

May the peace of Advent be with you throughout this season as we celebrate the blessings of God's love for us that are ever present in our lives.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

### An Afternoon at MEND

*By Betsy Meiman*

**M**END, which stands for "Meet Each Need with Dignity" is really quite special. Treadwell Atkins and I went up to visit the facility last spring and meet the team we would be working with for The Solar Outreach Project. Although we've worked with MEND quite a bit through the years at St. Michael's, especially at Holiday Cheer, and of course they are our first candidate for The SOP, I've never gone to the actual building in Pacoima. Quite frankly it is overwhelming. Not in the "how can we ever make a difference against the tide of poverty" kind of way, but in the "by God, this is the answer," kind of way.

I was not prepared for the scope of their operation. It was truly awe inspiring. The space, in a brand new building, is bright and inviting. Home made Cinco de Mayo flags and decorations floated color about our heads. The intake waiting area bustled with families, flanked on one side by a food distribution center with regiments of boxes filled with fresh healthy groceries on conveyor belts, saluting with and added Mother's Day bouquet. The food is donated by area grocery stores like TJ's and Whole Foods and Ralph's. All food is healthy and the groceries are loaded in one week packages designed to feed a family of four. MEND will also include birthday cakes if they are alerted to a special date.

On the other side is the clothing center, which looks like a retail store, where clients and every member of their family can choose 8 items from the racks of prescreened and cleaned

clothing. In the back area are showers for the homeless and a laundry service, so they can visit families or interview for jobs or just hold their heads high.

And this is just the first floor. All of MEND's services are free. 90% of MEND's work force is volunteers. And it runs like clock work. There is a state of the art dental clinic, medical exam rooms, a triage first aid, optometry center, yoga rooms, counseling, education center teaching English as a second language. All run by volunteer doctors, dentists, hygienists, optometrists, and other professionals in the health and education fields. The fabulous dental clinic also doubles as a teaching facility for dental students, who work alongside professional dental volunteers. The ultimate goal is to empower those in need by relieving the effects of poverty, so they can work towards self sufficiency. Truly a hand up and not a hand out.

We met informally with Marianne, Jenny and Ward. Treadwell and I discussed where the project was, how we planned to move forward and how this is our first project, so basically, we are learning as we go. Marianne, Jenny and Ward asked questions, gave ideas and assured us that they, in view of their own history, were willing to walk with us into the unknown and knew that we would all get it done. Ward, a long time volunteer, runs a new energy tech company and the first thing he did after the meeting was to call our installer, Peter Weich and vet him and his company (he passed with

flying colors!).

At the end of our tour, we ran in to Ed Rose. Unassuming in jeans, MEND tshirt and baseball cap, he was working in the food distribution center. He was excited about the solar prospect and was crackling with ideas. He talked briefly, and matter of factly (he was, of course, too modest) about how he, his wife Carolyn, their five kids and a few friends had started MEND in his garage. With just a few people bringing and distributing clothing, food, and furniture, they helped local families down on their luck keep their dignity as they struggled financially.

As I walked out of that oasis of comfort and relief into the Pacoima industrial desert, I marveled at the force of goodwill and humanity that operates such a huge and successful organization. I'd walked in to MEND doubting our little Solar Outreach endeavor, the veracity of the project, our ability to accomplish it, and walked out with a renewed will to face the challenge that lay ahead. Just like all the other people in need going through MEND's doors.

To find out more about The St. Michael and All Angels Solar Outreach Project go to [www.stmikessolar.org](http://www.stmikessolar.org).



*See MEND, page 6*

St. Michael's Community Outreach Projects Committee  
Invites You to Be a Part of

# Holiday Cheer! 2010

**Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**  
**10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**



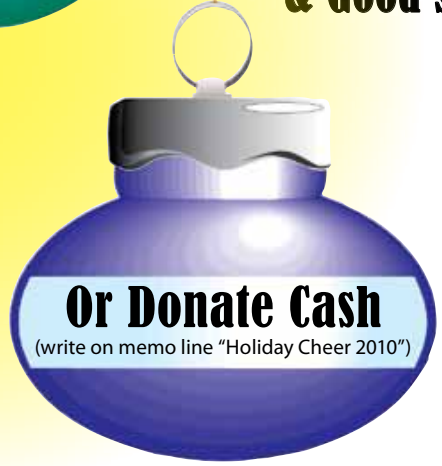
**Donate Food  
for Lunch,  
Snacks & Drinks**



**Sign Up to Give a  
Child a New Outfit**



**Donate a  
New Toy**



**Or Donate Cash**

(write on memo line "Holiday Cheer 2010")

**We Need Volunteers & Donations for One of Our**

**BIGGEST**  
**Events of the Year!**

**Benefitting: MEND**  
(Meeting Each Need With Dignity)

**& Good Shepherd Shelters**  
(for Women and Children)

**Bring the  
Whole Family!**

**FREE Parking  
in 2 Big Lots!**

**Decorate Cookies, Make Crafts, Sing Christmas Songs, Play Games!  
Cooks, Giftwrappers, & Cleaner-Uppers are ALL Welcome!**

Questions? Call Jane Wilson, 818.267.4058 • e-mail: [project@stmikessc.org](mailto:project@stmikessc.org)

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# The Calendar

December 2010

**Sunday Schedule** • *Sunday Services are 8:00 am (no choir) and 10:30 am (with choir) in the Sanctuary.*  
 • *Sunday School (Godly Play, Middle School, Sr. High, and Adult Forums) and Adult Choir begin at 9:30 am.*  
 • *Children's Church begins at 10:30 in the Blue Room and the children are brought into Eucharist for the Peace.*  
 • *Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 am service unless otherwise noted.*

| Sunday                                                                                               | Monday                                                                                                                   | Tuesday                                                | Wednesday                | Thursday                              | Friday                                                                                                        | Saturday                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                          |                                                        | 1                        | 2<br>7:30 PM Choir<br>Rehearsal (MR)  | 3<br>12:00 NOON<br>Fourth Quarter<br>Luncheon (CO)                                                            | 4                                                 |
| 5 Advent 2<br>12:00 noon Special<br>Vestry Meeting (UR)<br>12:30 PM Healing Prayer<br>Gathering (FR) | 6                                                                                                                        | 7<br>7:30 PM SMCOP<br>(Youth Lounge)                   | 8                        | 9                                     | 10<br>12:00 NOON<br>Fourth Quarter<br>Luncheon (CO)                                                           | 11<br>10:00 AM Holiday<br>Cheer! (PH)             |
| 12 Advent 3                                                                                          | 13                                                                                                                       | 14<br>7:00 PM Finance<br>Committee (CO)                | 15                       | 16<br>7:30 PM Choir<br>Rehearsal (MR) | 17                                                                                                            | 18                                                |
| 19 Advent 4<br>10:30 AM Advent Lessons<br>& Carols                                                   | 20                                                                                                                       | 21 St. Thomas<br>the Apostle<br>7:00 PM Vestry<br>(UR) | 22                       | 23                                    | 24 Christmas Eve<br>5:00 PM Holy<br>Eucharist &<br>Christmas<br>Pageant (S)<br>10:00 PM Holy<br>Eucharist (S) | 25 Christmas Day<br>9:00 AM Holy<br>Eucharist (S) |
| 26 Christmas 1                                                                                       | 27 St. Stephen,<br>Deacon &<br>Martyr<br>10:00 AM Prayer<br>Shawl Group<br>(YL)<br>7:00 PM Prayer<br>Shawl Group<br>(YL) | 28 St. John,<br>Apostle &<br>Evangelist                | 29 The Holy<br>Innocents | 30                                    | 31 New Year's Eve                                                                                             |                                                   |

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

## MEND from page 3

You can make a donation to help us put solar panels on MEND via the website. If you work for a corporation that makes charitable donations but does not donate to religious or political institutions, they can make a donation directly to MEND, a non sectarian operation. Just make sure it is marked clearly for the Solar Panels. If you need some materials to explain the project, please contact me at EFMeiman@me.com or direct your employers to the website—ours for Solar Outreach Project info or MENDpoverty.org for more information on MEND's history, goals and services.



Jenny Gutierrez, Chief Operating Officer of MEND stands next to Ed Rose, who, along with his wife Carolyn and five kids, started MEND in his garage in 1967. Behind them is the warehouse of The Food Distribution Center of MEND which provides fresh and dry good groceries, and sometimes birthday cakes, free of charge to families who need it.



The food distribution area.



The "store" where each family member can choose up to 8 items.



Community volunteers fill boxes with food other volunteers have collected from area supermarket and other donation sources. They top it off with Mother's Day flowers donated by Trader Joe's.



The state of the art dental clinic.

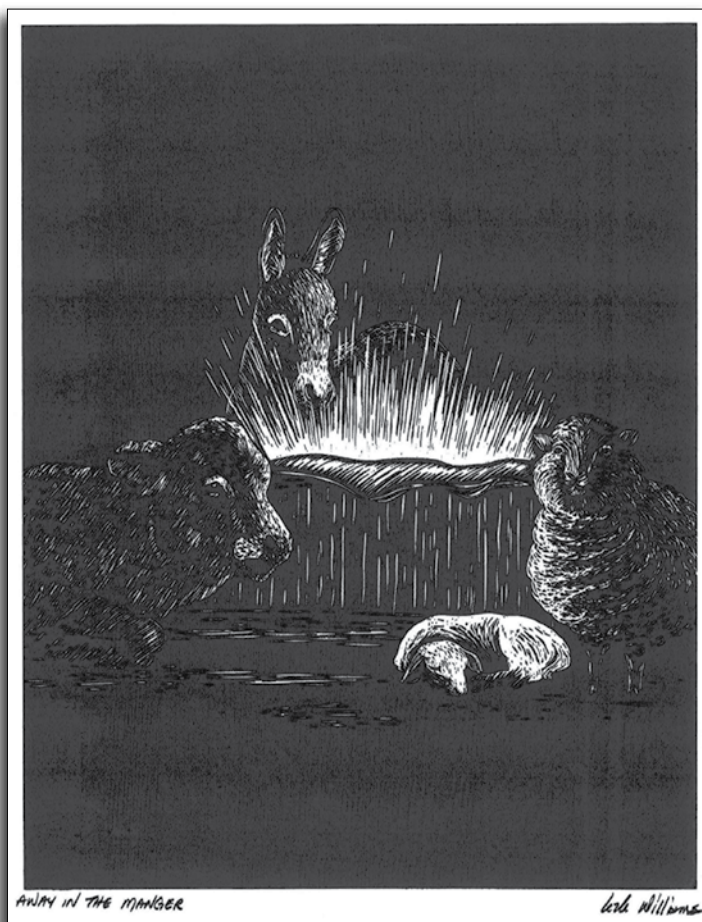
# Christmas at St. Michael's

## Christmas Eve, Friday, December 24

5:00 PM Holy Eucharist and  
Christmas Pageant  
10:00 PM Choral Eucharist

## Christmas Day, Saturday, December 25

9:00 AM Holy Eucharist (one hour earlier  
than in past years)



## Soccer World Books Benefit SoldierCare

St. Michael and All Angels member David Rosenberg has a children's book series recently published with "Survivor Africa" winner and pro soccer player and AIDS/cancer activist Ethan Zohn called "Soccer World". They are published by renowned educational publishers Nomad Press.

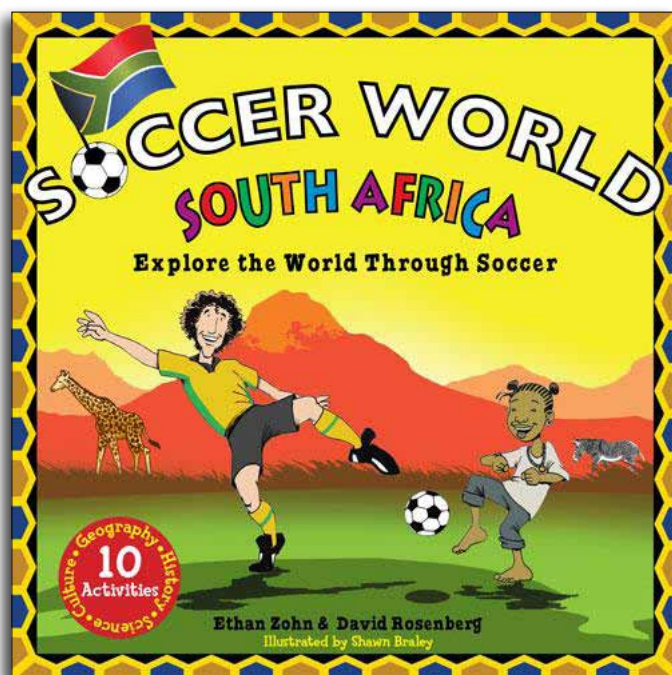
The premise of the book is to use soccer as a conduit to learn about other cultures. The first two books in the series focus on South Africa and Mexico, as Ethan travels to those countries and experiences customs, natural wonders and the historical sites of each nation. Each book is filled with activities to coincide with the text—from language learning to cooking to science experiments. The target age range is 6 to 10.

The books grew out of Ethan's globe trotting travels as spokesman for GrassrootSoccer, a nonprofit soccer

charity which targets young African children in the fight against AIDS/HIV. David was on the very first advisory board of the charity and has worked for the group since its inception ten years ago.

The books have been met with great critical acclaim, and two more of the continuing series are also in the works, with Spain debuting in Spring 2011 along with a Spanish language version of both Spain and Mexico volumes.

David encourages Saint Michael's members to order the books through Saint Michaels Amazon link—and also for anyone that e-mails him with an Amazon order confirmation, a portion of the profits will be donated to the wounded soldier outreach at St. Michaels, The SoldierCare Project. You can email the receipt confirmations to: [lnkdrone@gmail.com](mailto:lnkdrone@gmail.com)



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### ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



### VESTRY

Anne Kelly, Senior Warden  
David Connors, Junior Warden  
Alex Morales, Clerk  
Amador Rondilla, Treasurer  
Rodney Dickson  
Preston Fray  
Gail Green  
Betsy Hailey  
Leonard Harman  
Mary Ann Jacobson  
Norma Johnson  
Ron Schwartz  
Ed Sugar

### PARISH STAFF

|                             |                                               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>Priest Associate</b>     | The Rev. Julian Bull (bullj@campbellhall.org) |
| <b>Parish Administrator</b> | Duane Steadman (administrator@stmikessc.org)  |
| <b>Director of Music</b>    | Kristen Toedtman (kristentoedtman@gmail.com)  |
| <b>Organist</b>             | Emil Iliev (emil_iliev@yahoo.com)             |

### THE MIKE STAFF

|                       |                |
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| <b>Publisher</b>      | Duane Steadman |
| <b>Editor Emerita</b> | Soni Wright    |

### 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.*