

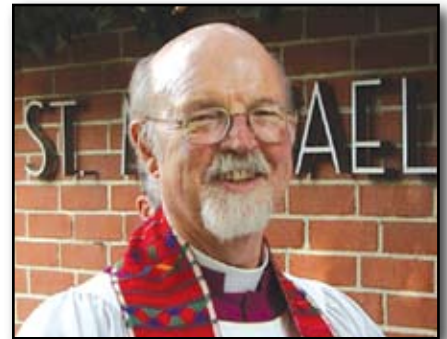


The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA
VOLUME 18, ISSUE 3 • March 2009

LENT, TEMPTATION AND CONSUMERISM

The Reverend Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr., D.Min.



The season of Lent is based on the wilderness experience of Jesus. St. Mark tells us in Mark 1 that after the baptism of Jesus “the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan...” The wilderness experience was a period of temptation for Jesus.

Jesus, according to Mark, was tempted by demonic forces. In the New Testament demonic forces are powers that enslave and lead to death, they are very real and powerful in our world. Jesus was tempted by the forces of living for that which only satisfies in the moment, giving oneself over to the power of evil for fame and prestige, and selling one’s soul for political power. Confronting these temptations as he prepared to begin his public ministry enabled Jesus to be absolutely clear about the centrality of the reign of God in his ministry. Jesus proclaimed a reign of compassion, justice and peace—authentic life—which one entered by dying to the old order controlled by the demonic forces and beginning a process of seeking this reign of God above all else.

The old order to which we must die is constantly tempting us. The old order tells us always to watch out for ourselves first. The old order tells us that we can have it all now. The old order tells us that might makes right. The old order addresses us primarily through the power of temptation. It is important, as it was for Jesus, for us to understand the power of temptation and to confront our temptations, which in our world operate in very subtle ways.

We live in a society in which we are told on a daily basis that we are what we have and that enough is always more. We seem to have lost any sense of what it means to have enough. It is rare in our society to hear someone say that they have enough money. Overeating has become a national health problem for us. Many people now speak of shopping as being their favorite hobby. A young woman said to me recently that she just felt better about herself when she was able to buy something new on a weekly basis. We even speak of shopping for churches.

In the culture in which we live consumerism is one of our greatest temptations. Because our culture is so consumeristic it is often hard for us to recognize the power of this temptation or even to realize when we are being tempted. The season of Lent offers us the opportunity to engage in the kind of spiritual and moral discernment that will at least enable us to recognize consumerism as a temptation.

In the New Testament demonic powers destroy authentic life. For example, in the Bible God creates and calls us to be faithful stewards of creation. The “demonic powers” tell us that we can do to God’s creation whatever we choose to do. Believing the demonic powers we pollute our rivers and streams and endanger our water supply that is essential to our very existence.

The demonic powers can become normative for us. For many years the demonic power of racism was normative in our society. In more recent years, primarily through the Civil Rights Movement, we have begun to recognize and confront the demonic power of racism. The demonic power of consumerism is still normative for us. The norm for us is that enough is always more.

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Shortly after the Second World War General Motors introduced annual changes in General Motors Cars. This was the beginning, in our society, of planned obsolescence, getting rid of something not because it is worn out, but just to have something new. The president of General Motors, at that time, was quoted as saying, "Business needs to create dissatisfied customers."

Advertising was seen as key to the process of creating dissatisfied customers. People needed to be lead to believe that their cars were inadequate. As mass advertising developed it began to focus not only on the product but also on us as individuals. It was not just our old car that was inadequate, but if we had this old car we were also somehow inadequate. Mass advertising was able to create a desire for the new, whether we needed it or not, and sent a message that we were inadequate with our old car. Mass advertising was very successful and captured our culture through the printed and spoken advertisement.

More and more we came under the control of mass advertising, which told us over and over again each day through our newspapers, radios and televisions that we were inadequate. We had clothes that were out of style, last year's car, we were too short, tall, fat, skinny, or our hair was too gray. The solution to our problem was always the same, buy the new. Consumption led to salvation. Those who were able to buy all of these new products were saved and those who could not buy were damned. The cult of the celebrity (the American idols) is closely related to the ability to consume.

Consumerism depends upon our believing that we are what we have. Consumerism teaches us that having is far more important than being. The rich are important and the poor are not important. Consumerism is a demonic force that stands over against the reign of God.

Facing into the temptation of consumerism requires that we be willing to relinquish this idol. To relinquish an idol requires prayer, soul searching, and a decision to live in a different way empowered by the grace of God. We must daily pray that God will release us from the temptation of defining ourselves by what we consume. We must pray for the insight to recognize the voice of the tempter, which tells us that we are "nothing without this product." We must slowly come to see the difference between needing to buy something and wanting to buy something to enhance our self-image. Lastly, we must chose a way of living that values being—personhood—over having. This is not an easy discipline, but in the world in which we live it can be a transformative spiritual discipline.

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

FROM THE VESTRY



**Betty Ferrell,
Senior Warden;**



**John Pryor,
Junior Warden**

The vestry began the year with a retreat on February 14th. New and continuing Vestry members were able to share their own faith journeys and to discuss our shared hopes for the year as we work together to strengthen our community at St. Michael's.

We are committed to continuing to address our financial deficit while building our many programs to serve our parish and community.

Father Atkins has asked me (Betty) to continue this year as Senior Warden and at our retreat the Vestry elected John Pryor to continue as Junior Warden.

We are honored to work with Father Atkins and the parish and to serve as wardens. We are blessed with a very dedicated Vestry.

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

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS

SUNDAY, MARCH 8

Spring forward your clocks one hour on

Saturday night.

TREASURER'S CORNER Margie Mullen, Treasurer

January, 2009 – Revenues and Expense Summary

| | Jan. Actual | Jan. Budget | YTD Actual | YTD Budget |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Revenues: | \$24,450 | \$30,727 | \$ 24,450 | \$30,727 |
| Total Expenses: | \$43,231 | \$49,109 | \$ 43,231 | \$ 49,109 |
| Net Total: | (\$18,781) | (\$18,382) | (\$ 18,781) | (\$ 18,382) |

Nothing special to report as we begin the 2009 budget.



Valley Interfaith Council Hosts Successful Event, by Betsy Hailey, Peace & Justice Committee

Close to one hundred people crowded the Parish Hall on Sunday February 22 for the conference on “Peacemaking: An Interfaith Imperative” sponsored by the Valley Interfaith Council and co-sponsored by ICUJP (Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace) and the Sepulveda Unitarian Universalist Society.



Our priest-in-charge Henry Atkins was joined by Rabbi Steven Jacobs and Dr. Maher Hatout in speaking about the theological roots of peacemaking in the three Abrahamic faiths. Their talks were followed by a panel entitled, “Confronting the Casualties of War in Our Community.” The panel included Stephen Rohde speaking on U.S.-sponsored torture, the Rev. Pam Tyler on Middle Eastern refugees, Carol Tannenberg on The Soldiers Project, and Mary Elizabeth Perry on interfaith studies as a pathway to peace.



The Rev. Anne Hines of Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church and Virginia Classick, Valley coordinator of Progressive Christians Uniting, moderated the two-part program, which also contained moving excerpts from the Abrahamic Faiths Peacemaking Initiative program at All Saints Pasadena last Memorial Day.

Many thanks to our wonderful hospitality committee Mary Ann Jacobson, Norma Johnson, and Treadwell Atkins, and to our technical wizards Hank Meiman and Willie Pryor for their invaluable assistance.

Photos courtesy of Treadwell Atkins

Consider Making A Monetary Easter Gift to St. Michael's

Included with your newsletter today is an Easter Gift donation envelope. Please complete the form on the envelope and either bring it with you to church and put it in the alms basket, or stamp and mail it back to us. We greatly appreciate your generosity in these challenging economic times.

Youth Group Continues to Assess Parish Carbon Footprint

At the February Youth Group, architect Eric Aukee helped the kids continue their research on how large of a carbon footprint the parish has, and discern ways to reduce its size.



Photo courtesy of Treadwell Atkins

We Need Liturgical Minister Volunteers For Holy Week

Signup sheets are at the back of the church. All positions are open and we encourage everyone to help.

April 2009 MIKE Deadline: Please send copy and/or pictures via e-mail to lauren@stmikessc.org by **Tuesday, March 17**. If you don't have a computer, bring your articles to the Parish Office by that time.

READ the MIKE Online! All you do is go to the website, 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.

March Calendar

St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| 1 Women's Care Cottage Clothing Collection 9:00 AM Men's Group Morning Prayer 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Choristers Reh | 2 6:15 PM Book Discussion Group (home of Mary Ann Jacobson) | 3 7:00 PM Executive Committee (CO) 7:30 PM Community Outreach Projects Committee (UR) | 4 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist (S) | 5 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR) | 6 12:00 NOON Fourth Quarter (CO) | 7 <i>SPRING FORWARD ONE HOUR! DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS TOMORROW</i> |
| 8 <i>DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS</i> 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Choristers Reh 4:30 PM Lenten Reflection Group (UR) | 9 | 10 7:00 PM Finance Committee (CO) | 11 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist (S) | 12 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR) | 13 | 14 8:00 PM Lit.UP! (PH) |
| 15 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Choristers Reh 12 NOON SMCOP Big Sunday meeting (UR) 12:30 PM Youth Group (YL) 4:30 PM Lenten Reflection Group (UR) | 16 | 17 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting (UR) <i>APRIL '09 Newsletter Articles DUE</i> | 18 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist (S) | 19 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR) | 20 | 21 11:30 AM Liturgical Committee (UR) |
| 22 9:15 AM Choir Rehearsal 10:30 AM Choristers Reh 4:30 PM Lenten Reflection Group (Home of Betsy Hailey) | 23 | 24 | 25 12:15 PM Holy Eucharist (S) | 26 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR) | 27 | 28 |
| 29 10:30 AM Choristers Reh 4:30 PM Lenten Reflection Group (Home of Betsy Hailey) | 30 TBD Prayer Shawl Knitting Groups (FR) | 31 <i>César Chávez Day</i> <i>Parish Office Closed</i> | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> Locations: CO: Church Office CR: Choir Room FR: Fireside Room PH: Parish Hall UR: Upper Room YL: Youth Lounge S: Sanctuary </div> | | | |

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. Children's Church begins at 10:30 in the Purple Room and the children are brought into Eucharist for the Peace. Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 AM service unless otherwise noted.

GOINGS ON AT ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH

THANKSGIVING FOR A JOB WELL DONE

To: Mary Ann Jacobson

for coordinating all the special occasions so far this year.

To: Nancy Kim and Jose Chavez

for helping to clean up the Fireside Room

**To: Deacon Catherine, Katie Bull,
and Liz Mullen**

for taking our weekly food offerings to the Interfaith Food pantry.

The next time you see these individuals, please give each 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.

Always-Needed Food Pantry Items

Canned fruit and vegetables.

Baby food in plastic jars.

Tuna, peanut butter, powdered milk in individual packets.

Individual size snacks.

Plastic and paper shopping bags.

Diapers and feminine hygiene items.

Travel-size soap, toothpaste and disposable razors.

And money!

Quotation for March

"I believe that banking institutions are more dangerous to our liberties than standing armies. If the American people ever allow private banks to control the issue of their currency, first by inflation, then by deflation, the banks and corporations that will grow up around [the banks] will deprive the people of all property until their children wake-up homeless on the continent their fathers conquered. The issuing power should be taken from the banks and restored to the people, to whom it properly belongs."

*Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) (Attributed)
3rd President of the United States*

March Birthdays

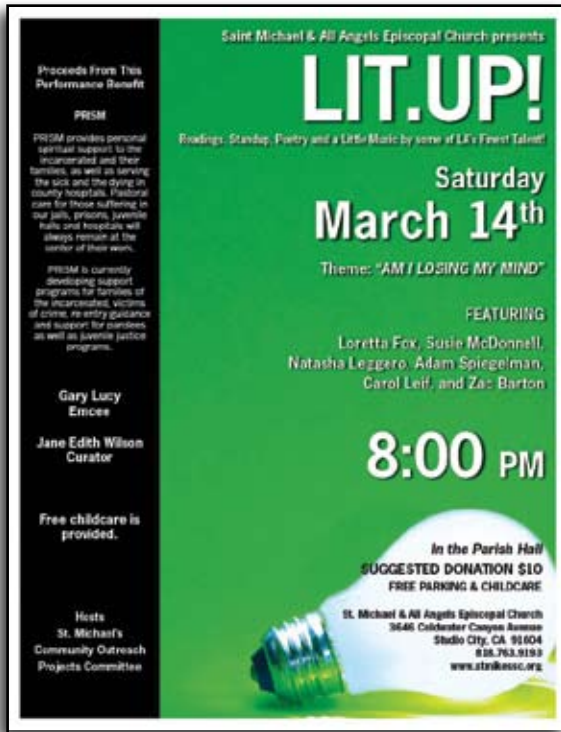
| Day | Name |
|-----|---|
| 3 | Jay Hathaway |
| 4 | Gail Green |
| 11 | Karen Haddock Bill Haddock Kyle Bolyard |
| 15 | Betty Ferrell Dennis Vasquez |
| 18 | Blue Bookhard Cally Crane |
| 20 | Adam LoCascio |
| 21 | Sasha Matustik Gwynneth Renton |
| 22 | Soni Wright |
| 23 | Margaret Renton Jackson Prybil |
| 28 | Chris Long |
| 29 | Leslie Chapman-Rose Austin Baggett |
| 30 | Dolly Rogers |
| 31 | Loretta Cocha |

March Anniversaries

| Day | Name |
|-----|---|
| 3 | Anne & Michael Beckner Denise & Ron Schwartz |
| 10 | Julie Meine & Richard Bate |
| 16 | Lois & Paul Vaughan |
| 25 | Margie & Liz Mullen |

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

ST. MICHAEL'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROJECTS Jane Wilson, Chair



LIT.UP! SATURDAY, MARCH 14th at 8 pm

This month's theme is "Am I Losing my Mind," starring Loretta Fox, Susie McDonnell, Natasha Leggero, Adam Spiegelman, Carol Leif, and Zac Barton. This show has a little bit of everything—comedy, music, drama and personal essays. The box office from this show is going to PRISM, which provides personal spiritual support to the incarcerated and their families, as well as serving the sick and the dying in county hospitals. Pastoral care for those suffering in our jails, prisons, juvenile halls and hospitals will always remain at the center of their work. PRISM is currently developing support programs for families of the incarcerated, victims of crime, re-entry guidance and support for parolees as well as juvenile justice programs.

BIG SUNDAY PLANNING MEETING AND MAILING PARTY

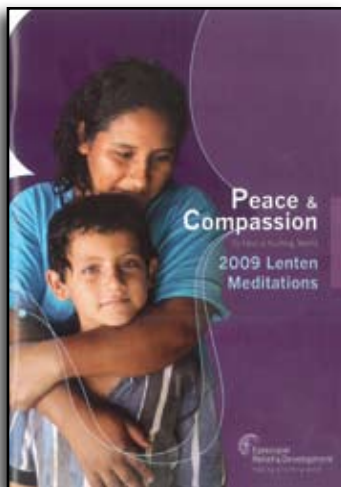
On Sunday, March 15th, right after services (noon-ish) we are having a general meeting in the Upper Room to plan all the elements that we need to put in place for our Big Sunday event for soldiers (Sunday, May 3rd). We need team captains and worker bees—the whole nine yards—to help prepare and serve the lunch for soldiers, set up, break down, the craft and baking sales, entertaining kids, gathering items for the troops, etc. Come and have lunch (provided by SMCOP), listen in, sign up and help us mail out the invites for this great event.

THE NEXT SMCOP MEETING

Do you have a hankering to do nice things for people living in extreme need? Then we need you to join our committee! All you have to do is show up to the meetings and give us whatever time and talents you have available. Our next meeting is Tuesday, March 3rd at 7:30 p.m.

SMCOP MEETING/CONTACT INFO

Our meetings are always on the first Tuesday night of the month, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. We need more volunteers to fill our ranks and help with all our Spring and Summer endeavors (Big Sunday's event for wounded soldiers, our expanding programs doing outreach to those in prison, planning the next Angel Award Dinner, etc). If you have any questions, comments or donations please call Jane Wilson at 818-343-8438 or email project@stmikessc.org.



LENT 2009

This year's Lenten daily devotional *Peace and Compassion* is available for FREE in the church and in the parish hall. There are also table tents to supplement your graces at dinnertime. Please feel free to take one or more copies for your family.

Sundays in Lent at 4:30–6:00 p.m.: Beginning March 8, Father Atkins will lead a Lenten reflection group based on the devotional booklet *Peace and Compassion*. In addition to this booklet, Fr. Atkins will lead a discussion on the book, *The Lord is My Shepherd*, by Leonardo Boff. There is a limited supply of these books that are available from Fr. Atkins. March 8 & 15 will take place at church in the Upper Room. On March 22, we welcome special guest, the Reverend Canon George Regas, who makes a rare personal appearance. Canon Regas will respond to Fr. Atkins' presentation on peace and compassion, followed by a short Q & A session. On March 29, Fr. Atkins will wrap the series up. The March 22nd and 29th meetings will take place at Betsy Hailey's home: 11747 Canton Place, Studio City, CA 91604, 818.763.7827. Light refreshments (no meal) will be served.

Wednesdays in Lent at 12:15 pm, we'll celebrate Holy Eucharist in the Chapel.

EASTER FLOWERS 2009

We'd very much like to have LOTS of Easter flowers this year, but we can't do it without your help. If you would like to remember a loved one or honor a person with a donation to this Easter celebration, please fill in the form below (or the form placed in the Sunday bulletins) and place it in the alms basin or return it to the parish office with your check, marked "Easter Flowers" on the memo line. *Any amount donation is appreciated.* Please turn in this request by **Sunday, April 5th (Palm Sunday)** so that we may be sure to include your dedication in the Easter bulletins. Thank you.



EASTER FLOWERS AND GREENS

We appreciate your donation!

Given: _____ in loving memory of _____ in honor of _____ in thanksgiving for

Text (please print): _____

Given by: _____

Telephone: _____

Amount \$ _____ Check Credit card: VISA MC AMEX DISCOVER

Card no. _____ Exp. Date: _____

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Sunday, April 5 | 8:00 & 10:30 am | Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday Liturgy of the Palms and Holy Eucharist | Sanctuary |
| Monday, April 6 | 7:00 pm | Holy Eucharist | Chapel |
| Tuesday, April 7 | 7:00 pm | Holy Eucharist | Chapel |
| Wednesday, April 8 | 7:00 pm | Holy Eucharist | Chapel |
| Thursday, April 9 | 6:30 pm 7:30 pm | Maundy Thursday Eucharist and Agapé Supper Maundy Thursday and Foot Washing Liturgies | Parish Hall Sanctuary |
| Friday, April 10 | 12 noon | Good Friday Liturgy & Stations of the Cross | Sanctuary |
| Saturday, April 11 | 7:30 pm | Great Vigil of Easter and Baptisms | Sanctuary |
| Sunday, April 12 | 8:00 am 9:30 am 10:30 am | Easter Day Holy Eucharist (no music) Easter Egg Hunt (no Sunday School) Easter Day Festival Procession and Holy Eucharist | Sanctuary Parish Grounds Sanctuary |

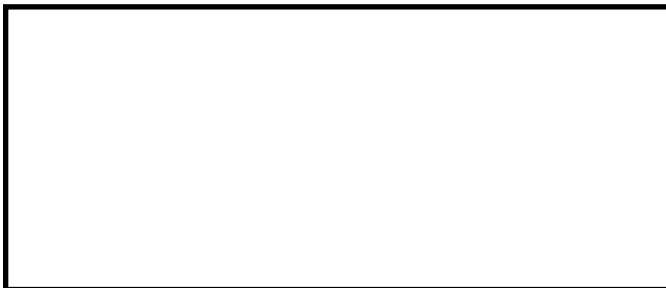
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Margie Mullen, Treasurer
Anne Kelly, Clerk
Phyllis Bracey
Bob Bucker
David Connors
Leonard Harman
Mary Ann Jacobson
Norma Johnson
Ed Sugar
Glenn Sunness
Robin Tarnoff

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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.