



The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA
VOLUME 19, ISSUE 10 • November 2010

About Stewardship

By the Reverend Canon Mark Shier

Sermon given at St. Michael's on October 10, 2010

I am Mark Shier, a retired priest in the Diocese of Los Angeles, and I am pleased to be your guest leader in today's Consecration Sunday at St Michael's. Consecration is an appropriate term for Christians; it simply means firmly giving ourselves to what we value, in this case God, and receiving in return all that God wants to give us, after we have given God permission to bless us.

Scientists tell us that all the elements that make up our beautiful planet, other planets, the stars themselves, and the dust between the galaxies—all these elements were manufactured in the hearts of ancient stars that ran their life course and then exploded in violent death throes. Those explosions spewed forth the stuff of those stars into the space around them; that stuff was the elements we learned about in high school physics classes (you know, hydrogen, helium, oxygen, iron, argon, and so on), and it spread itself as dust throughout space. In time, this dust coalesced into more stars and planets and the cycle started all over again. So it is with our star, our sun, our planet, our bodies. We may be "such stuff as dreams are made on," as Shakespeare wrote in *The Tempest*, but we are also creatures of the stars. Our spirits are enfolded in stardust, stardust which is the dust of the ground, the mud of the earth, the primordial ooze of our Genesis creation stories. We are more privileged creatures than we usually judge ourselves to be. Look at the person in the pew next to you; look all around this room; we may have different theologies about our spirits, but there is one truth about our bodies. We are stardust; we belong to the majesty of the heavens just as surely as we belong to the intimacy of our love.

I take my theme from a saying of our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the wisest of our race, who knew much of human and divine exaltation and the brokenness of blown-up stars. He spoke to crowds of walking stardust and fed their hunger for wisdom about leading a meaningful life, a life worth living, a life with

power and joy and grace. He could just as easily be talking to us today, for though our outward circumstances seem universes apart, our essential nature as human folk, men and women with a beginning, a middle, and an end, is the same. The drama of their lives is the drama of our lives.



Their question is ours: what makes life worth the living?

Jesus said, "If you give to others, you will be given a full amount in return." (Luke 6:38)

This is a favorite passage for stewardship committees in most Christian churches. Usually in the fall, as we are doing now, there is a program that focuses on our responsibilities as guardians of the gifts God has poured into our lives, with our concomitant responsibility to share those gifts with others. There is a particular focus, of course, on the financial needs of the congregation. We have a mundane business aspect just as any other business. We, too, must buy electricity, natural gas, insurance, repairs, and the time and energy of talented folk. Our problem is that, unlike other businesses, we can't raise the price of our product to cover the rising costs of making it available. The product itself is free, and ever will be. But educating, and advertising, and placing the product close to people have a cost. So we ask ourselves to be generous in giving to make that possible. Sometimes we are tiresomely persistent in that asking, as most priests and ministers would admit. It's not something we like to do. Perhaps we wouldn't have to be so persistent and so tiresome if we all really understood the message of Jesus: "If you give to others, you will be given a full amount in return." No one loses by giving; there is always an abundant return. So you see why church stewardship committees love this passage.

It's taken me a long time really to understand and accept this saying of Jesus, to see its

implications for my welfare and spiritual life.

But it's a stewardship of a different kind that I have finally learned, a stewardship of the soul, my soul, others' souls. When I have heard this teaching of Jesus I have been so focused upon the stardust aspect of life, on the material here and now, of space and time, on the cost of providing the means for the message, on electricity and gas and roof repair, that I have overlooked the far more important point to which the wise Lord Christ was pointing. In matters of the spirit, in the economy of the soul, His principle applies just as appropriately as it does for our more mundane concerns.

I finally get it that what I give is what I get. If I am pessimistic about what I have to do—my day, my year, my life—it is pessimism that comes back to me. If I am angry that the world does not march to my tune, I keep finding anger dancing around me and my concerns. If all I see is other peoples' stupidity, they seem to regard me as mentally defective, too. If I am cynical about the motives of politicians, police, clergy, charities, government, I cannot escape the jaded judgment of those who regard me with world-weary eyes. If I close down on the world, seeing nothing good in the new or nothing helpful in tradition, then everything seems an annoyance, everyone seems inane. If it's darkness that I note in the world, it's darkness that others seem to reflect to me. It's not fun.

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But if I commit myself to sacrifice of time and energy on behalf of someone else or something I really believe in, I am amazed to see what lengths people go to help me. If I find joy even in the difficulties in life let alone the pleasures, I find that I am happier than I could ever have imagined. When I view the human failings of my brothers and sisters with compassion, it is kindness I find in the most unexpected places. When I forgive the wound delivered in malice, the burden of anger and hurt melts away, and I am freer than I had ever imagined I could be. If I really commit myself to loving others, I am thrilled to find that I seem to love and accept myself, and old guilts melt away. If I really commit myself to love, it is love that surrounds me like the heady perfume of a musk rose or the gorgeous light of dawn upon the hillside. Life is a lot more fun this way.

I finally get it that what I give is what I get. Jesus was a very wise man.

There is a little verse going around the internet. You may have read it, but it bears repeating. My source attributed it to Mother Theresa, but, as with all things on the internet, who knows for sure? It's called

Do It Anyway

People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered; forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; build it anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; It was never between you and them—anyway.

Be generous in giving yourself to whomever you come around. You will always get more

than you give. Blown up stars and human and divine spirit just seem to work that way. Blown-up stars, stardust, such stuff as dreams are made on, souls of incalculable worth, spirits of wonder, lives of majesty. Are we not fortunate creatures?

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

December 2010 MIKE Deadline

Please send copy and/or pictures via e-mail to administrator@stmikessc.org by Monday, November 22. If you don't have a computer, bring your articles to the Parish Office by that time.

November Birthdays

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

November Anniversaries

Day	Name
1	Robert Perry & Dennis Vasquez
8	Andrea Odinov Fuller & DJ Fuller
12	John & Laurie Vincent
13	Brooks & Kathleen Taylor
24	William Hendley & Jon Albert
28	Polly Davis & Peter Epstein

Should you be listed here? Or, if you wish to leave your birthday or anniversary unpublished, give the church office a call or e-mail (administrator@stmikessc.org) to let us know. *Please Note: Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month.*

Thanksgiving for a Job Well Done

To: Tom Heuer for his work refinishing the benches on either side of the altar.

Ed Sugar and Preston Fray for their ongoing efforts to clean up around the campus.

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.

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 website, you can shop at Amazon.com through its link. St. Michael's gets a small rebate for each purchase made through this link.

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

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



From the Vestry

Anne Kelly, Senior Warden
David Connors, Junior Warden



We want to keep you updated on our progress in searching for a new Rector.

Last Spring we completed a Parish Profile which described who we are, what is important to us as a congregation and our vision for the future. That profile continues to be available on St. Michael's website.

In July and August while the Bishop's office was screening candidates, the Search Committee and the Vestry compiled a lengthy set of questions we wanted to use in interviewing candidates and we solicited additional ideas for questions from the parish.

Now we have three strong candidates

for the position: one from this diocese, one from Northern California, and one from New York. The Search Committee has reviewed all the documents on each candidate. The documents include a resume, a Personal Profile, several sermons and responses to three questions sent to them by the Search Committee. Those questions were:

1) Tell us about your spiritual journey into the priesthood. 2) How would you describe your greatest gifts as a priest? and 3) Tell us where you are at this time in your journey with God.

The next step involves a conference call between the Search Committee and each candidate. Once that is completed, the Search Committee will have in-person interviews with each candidate.

As you know, much prayer and reflection has gone into this process. This is a discernment process for us as a parish and for the candidates. As we learn more about each other, through prayer and discussion we will move toward a mutual decision that we trust will be God's will for our parish.

We will continue to keep the parish informed as we move forward by means of weekly announcements in both worship services, 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.

Pastoral Care—A Recipient's Perspective

By Rae Markus

After being on the Pastoral Care Committee, serving as a Lay Eucharistic Visitor, and co-facilitating the Healing Prayer Gathering, I found myself, after undergoing major surgery early this year, on the receiving end of the services provided by these ministries. Although I had always thought these ministries were important, I gained new insight into aspects of the things we do of which I hadn't previously been aware, and experienced the importance of them far beyond what I had previously perceived.

The LEV visits I received before I was able to sit through a Sunday service helped me feel like a cared-for part of the community, and helped restore my feeling of normalcy. The prayer shawl was, as the prayer of blessing says, "warming, comforting, enfolding and embracing", and even more so the prayer

that accompanied it, and I felt the love of the person who had knit it and of the people in the congregation who blessed it, and really did feel "cradled in hope . . . and wrapped in love". And, of course, I had the reassurance that the participants of our Healing Prayer Gathering, in particular, were praying for my healing.

But the big surprise for me was how significant were the ordinary things like providing rides and meals, which I had until now thought of as "merely" practical rather than spiritual. After all, what's "spiritual" about giving somebody a ride, or bringing them a meal? Actually, as I found out, a lot.

When I needed a ride to UCLA Medical Center for my first follow-up visit, I was focused on my need to get there and was glad just to have someone willing to drive me that far.

But getting there, it hit me that I was there to find out the results of tests to determine whether I had something life-threatening. I found it calming and reassuring to know that the person who drove me was someone who, had the news not been favorable, would have been someone who could provide me moral support and a link with reality, and who could remember or write down what the doctor said, had I been too upset or stunned to be able to do so myself.

After my daughter, who had come out here from New Jersey to be with me, had to return, I was still unable to drive myself to get meals out and unable to prepare them myself (other than simple things like making sandwiches and eggs and heating things up). The food that people prepared and brought me did more than satisfy a physical need. I could taste the love in it. Food like that is more than physical sustenance—it is healing prayer in tangible form; a manifestation of the giver's intention for the recipient's healing.

We don't always know what impact their illness or loss may be having on people, or what impact our actions may have on them. People can feel isolated and alienated, discouraged, depressed or despondent, without our ever knowing it, and our acts of kindness can make the difference between healing or not, and

See PASTORAL CARE, page 6

Treasurer's Corner

September 2010—Revenue and Expense Summary

	September Actual	September Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenue	\$ 40,220	\$ 40,355	\$255,062	\$268,989
Total Expense	26,262	35,360	298,260	343,025
Net	\$ 13,958	\$ 4,995	(\$ 43,198)	(\$ 74,036)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry St. Michael's Was a Founding Congregation

By Katherine DesJardins Bull

The North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry (NHIFP) was conceived over 25 years ago in 1981 by five very dedicated women. They came from different religious congregations in the East San Fernando valley. All of them saw the growing problem of hunger right in their own backyard. Our very own Mary Louise Smith, Honorary Canon of the Diocese of Los Angeles and member of St. Michael's, represented us as one of the founding congregations.

The Interfaith Pantry opened its doors on March 13, 1983, in a Sunday school room at First Christian Church. Temple Beth Hillel provided storage and packing space for food and St. Michael's provided the helpline office. From its early days, NHIFP was as it remains today a 100% volunteer operation serving the hungry in our community. The story of NHIFP is a story about how God moves among and interacts with people. It is about the sower who went to sow some seed, and as he sowed some seed, it fell upon good ground. Hundreds and hundreds of volunteers, including the good people of St. Michael's, contribute the food, bags, labor and love to continue the mission of this extraordinary organization.

Today, as it was then, food is collected by congregations, individuals, schools and community organizations. Congregational members of the coalition include: Adat Ari El, Congregational Church of the Chimes, Emmanuel Lutheran, First Christian, Faith Presbyterian, First United Methodist of North Hollywood, Metropolitan Community Church in the Valley, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, and Temple Beth Hillel. Several schools, businesses, individuals and other communities of faith also contribute on a regular basis. The Pantry opens its doors to the hungry every Monday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. We are a "no ask" pantry and do not turn anyone away. When a person comes to us in need of food, it is a humbling experience for them. We trust that they would rather be anywhere else but in a position to go to a shelter for food.

It is this spirit of respect for the client and fellow volunteers that has long been a unifying characteristic of the Pantry. As we have lost several of our founders, the current volunteers try to keep this spirit alive. We lost Marge Luke, who passed away in October. Marge was one of

the original founders of the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry and a member of Faith Presbyterian Church of Valley Village. Marge in her sweet and kind voice always stood as a voice of reason. She was a pioneer in the field of interfaith coalitions, holding the vision that coming together as people of different faiths to help those in need was from a position of strength. Marge was also very specific that outreach be spiritual and not just the handing out of food. Volunteers needed to be respectful and caring to our clients and to each other. Many of the volunteers have been involved since the inception. Some who have "only" been around for 20 years see themselves as "neophytes."

As the recession continues to take its toll, the numbers at the Pantry have doubled in recent years and we are now serving over 65,000 people per year. The food demands are enormous and the supply of food has not kept pace with the demand.

Thank you, St. Michael's, for all of the food donations and volunteers that you contribute. You are a part of a remarkable and great tradition. Actually, St. Michael's contributions, on a per parishioner basis, is phenomenal. We are a small congregation, but a powerhouse when it comes to giving to those in need.

Please be sure to attend our Annual Service of Thanksgiving on Wednesday, November 24, at 7:30 p.m. at First Christian Church located at the corner of Colfax Avenue and Moorpark. Please bring canned goods and join us for a reception following the service. The service is family and wheelchair friendly.

Also, we are happy to announce the launching of our new website. Please visit www.nhifp.org to learn more about the Pantry and ways in which you can help or help others in their time of need.

If you are looking for further ways to help, please read on.



Action Alert

Oppose Cuts to Emergency Food and Shelter Program

In the midst of the prolonged economic downturn, funding for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) is at risk of being cut by as much as \$100 million (50%). We urge you to contact your Senators and Representatives and ask them to oppose cuts to EFSP funding. Emergency Food and Shelter Program funding is used to support essential food and shelter programs for individuals who are homeless in our communities. Program supported by EFSP include food banks, emergency and transitional housing programs, domestic violence shelters, served meal and bagged grocery programs, and rental/utility assistance programs. Many local faith groups and faith-based organizations receive EFSP funding to support the important work they do to care for those in need in the community. Please contact your Senators and Representatives and urge them to strongly oppose any funding cuts to the EFSP program for fiscal year 2011.

Junior Warden David Connors Honored

Congratulations to Junior Warden David Connors who has been named a Cal State LA Distinguished Professor for 2009-2010. The campus newspaper describes David as a dynamite teacher with a wicked and wry sense of humor. David is now acting associate dean of CSULA's College of Arts and Letters



The Calendar

November 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 6:15 PM Book Discussion Group (Jacobson Home)	2 7:00 PM Transition Management Team (CO) 7:30 PM SMCOP (YL)	3	4 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (MR)	5 12:00 NOON Fourth Quarter Luncheon (CO)	6
7 All Saints 2:00 PM Organ Dedication Recital (S)	8	9 7:00 PM Finance Committee (CO)	10	11	12	13 8:00 PM Lit.Up! (PH)
14 Pentecost 25 12:15 PM Healing Prayer Gathering (FR)	15	16 7:00 PM Vestry (UR)	17	18	19	20
21 Pentecost Last <i>Christ the King</i>	22	23	24 7:30 PM Interfaith Thanksgiving Service (First Christian Church, 4390 Colfax Avenue)	25 Thanksgiving Day	26	27 10:00 AM Parish Cleanup Day
28 Advent 1	29 10:00 AM Prayer Shawl Group (YL) 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Group (YL)	30 Saint Andrew the Apostle				

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

Community Outreach News

By Jane Wilson



Lit Up! for November 13

The next show will be Saturday, November 13, at 8:00 p.m. with the theme "Video Killed the Radio Star." It will star Ed Crasnick, Laura House, Chris Bonno, Stefanie Wilder-Taylor, Bonnie Kaplan, and Chris Young, plus house comic Eddie Pepitone. Suggested donation for the evening of comedy, essays, song, and poetry is \$10 with this month's proceeds going to Team Survivor Los Angeles. Team Survivor Los Angeles (TSLA) provides free

exercise, health education and support programs for women living with cancer. Our mission is to enable women to regain and maintain their physical and emotional well-being. We welcome women of all ages and fitness levels in all stages of cancer treatment and recovery.



Thanksgiving Collection for NVCS

We will again be collecting items for the huge Thanksgiving dinner for the poor and homeless being served at North Valley Caring Services. Please look for sign-up sheets in the back of the church starting on Sunday, November 7, or e-mail or call Jane Wilson with what you might wish to donate. They need 30 frozen 8 to 11 pound frozen bone-in turkey breasts, 100 pounds of baking potatoes, canned yams, boxes of dressing, lemonade and punch mix, butter, rolls, pies, canned chicken broth, and canned gravy. Also, if you wish to purchase and sort of table decorations for the day or design some with your kids,

they love that as well! Final collections will be on Sunday, November 21, so it can all be delivered the following morning to NVCS.

Pastoral Care *from page 3*

sometimes literally between life and death. Most people at St. Michael's were not aware that I had been grieving the loss of someone very dear to me who had died a few months earlier. This was someone with whom I'd had a relationship that had been very close and deep on a spiritual level, but because, on the surface, it was somewhat peripheral, and we hadn't had as much contact the past few years, I didn't know how to explain it to people, and still don't. The care I received from people after my surgery allowed me in some way to receive the kindness and comfort I had needed to receive over the earlier loss, and to begin to heal from

that as well as from the surgery. It reassured me that I wasn't just "out there" by myself, but that there was a safety net; people to catch me if I fell.

All of these things are tangible expressions of human kindness. Those who do these things are stand-ins for Jesus, for the living, loving God. They are God's representatives on earth. And those who receive are thus inspired to be among the givers themselves, not out of a sense of duty or pay-back, but as love's natural response to love received.



Holiday Cheer— Date Set & Volunteers Needed!

Holiday Cheer will take place on Saturday, December 11, 2010, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This is a magical day where we have a holiday party for over 140 kids and their moms from area

shelters and poverty centers. More information to follow soon, but please contact Jane Wilson if you have any interest in coming on board as a team leader (especially in the kitchen preparation area, public relations, donations, or set-up and clean-up) for this great event. Sign-ups for donations and event volunteers will begin in November.

SMCOP's Next Meeting—We Need You!

This is truly the busiest of busy season for outreach at St. Michael's! If you have a passion for doing outreach to people in need, please join us. We are particularly in need of a person to oversee the Wig Exchange's outreach to area hospitals, but can use enormous help with all of our outreach endeavors. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, November 2nd, at 7:30 p.m. in the Youth Lounge. For more information on anything to do with SMCOP, please call Jane Wilson at 818.267.4058 or e-mail superqueerjane@yahoo.com.

Organ Dedication Recital

**Sunday, November 7,
2:00 p.m.**

On Sunday, November 7, we will celebrate the completion of our beautiful organ with a recital by our organist, Emil Iliev. Playing a repertoire of Bach and Mendelssohn, he will explore the beauty of these composer's works on both the organ and the piano. Joining him will be members of the choir for select solos and duets. Suggested donation, \$15 at the door. All are welcome and no one will be turned down for a smaller gift. For donations of \$25 or more (\$50 for a family), you are eligible to take a *tour* of the organ! Tours start at 1:30 and immediately following the recital and are led by music director Kristen Toedtman. A light reception will follow.

NORTH HOLLYWOOD INTERFAITH FOOD PANTRY

26th Annual Interfaith Service of Thanksgiving

THANKSGIVING EVE

Wednesday, November 24, 2010 at 7:30 p.m.

FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
OF NORTH HOLLYWOOD
4390 Colfax Avenue, North Hollywood

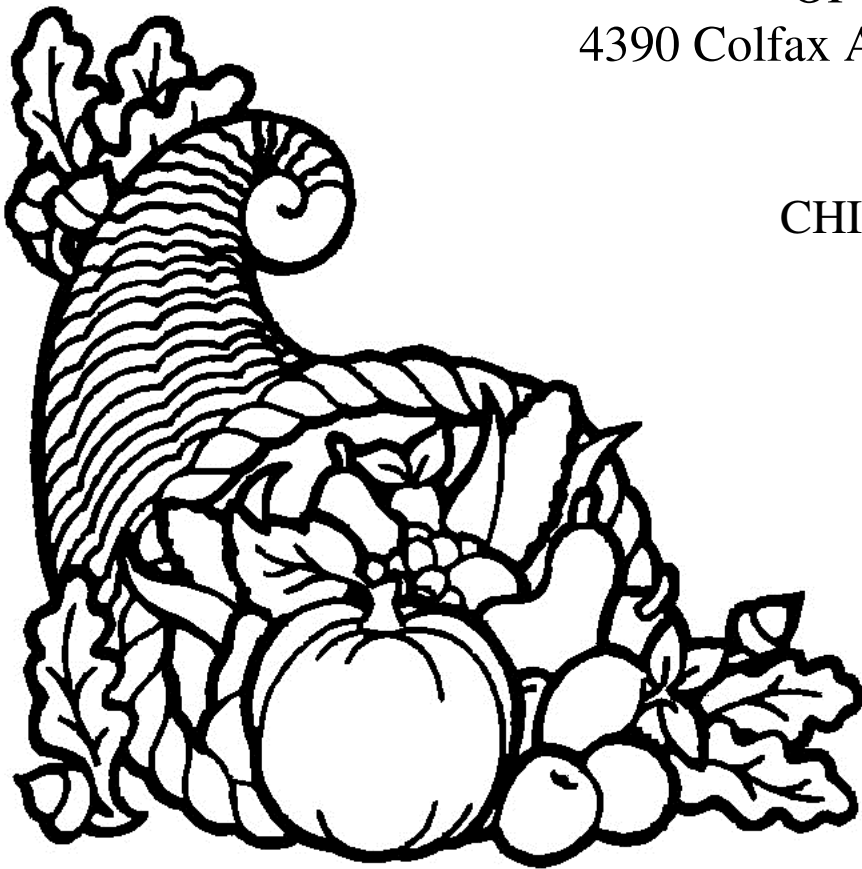
A FAMILY SERVICE
CHILDREN ARE WELCOME

Reception after the Service

Donations of staple
foods or money are
welcome and will
benefit the Pantry.

Service is
wheelchair accessible.

Information: 818.763.8218



St. Michael and All Angels Church

3646 Coldwater Canyon Ave., Studio City, CA 91604

phone • 818.763.9193

fax • 818.763.2172

general e-mail • mail@stmikessc.org

web address • www.stmikessc.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



VESTRY

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

PARISH STAFF

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

THE MIKE STAFF

Publisher Duane Steadman
Editor Emerita 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.