



The Mike

The Newsletter of St. Michael & All Angels Episcopal Church, Studio City, CA
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Generosity and Spiritual Health

By the Reverend Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr., D.Min.

Several years ago I heard a pastor of a Methodist Church recount the following experience. He said that as a young pastor his church was starting its stewardship campaign. A consultant from the Bishop's office had come to work with the parish. When he arrived at the church, in his first conversation with the pastor, he asked the pastor to give him a list of the top ten givers in the church. The pastor told him that he took great pride in not knowing who gave what in the parish

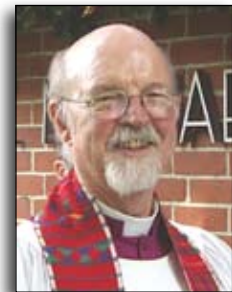
"That's irresponsible," said the consultant. "You are the pastor! You have responsibility for the spiritual health of this congregation. If I asked you which marriages are in big trouble or who in your congregation is in great danger of committing some unchristian act I hope you would know. Stewardship is just like that. It's not an option. It's a command of Jesus. You need to know who in your congregation is unfaithful, and you need to know who in your congregation is faithful so you can ask them for help in leading and teaching the others!"

Archbishop Romero used to say that the peace of God, God's shalom, leads us to give generously to the common good. "Peace," he said, "is generosity." God's peace that we know in Jesus the Christ leads us to acts of generosity. Jesus frees us to care for all of God's creation, to give freely of our time, talents, and resources. Generosity is a major characteristic of spiritual wholeness.

Professor Peter Singer, of Princeton University, recently pointed out that the two greatest philanthropists in the modern era, Bill Gates and Warren Buffet, are not religious people. They seem to be far more generous, at least as it is reflected in the manner in which they use their resources, than many religious people. Professor Singer's work has raised the question, among

others, as to how "religious" the "religious" really are.

As a parish priest I regularly hear middle and upper middle class people speak of why they do not give more of their time,



talents and resources to the church. People often say to me that they simply do not have the time to teach a church school class or serve on a parish committee. People often say that they are paying for their children to go to school or saving for a new home and thus cannot give much money to the church. Many of those people tend to think of the church as another civic organization, and they give to the church in much the same way that they pay dues to a civic club. In my experience some of the people who are the most critical of church programming are the very same people who give little of their time, talents or resources to support the church.

As a parish priest I also know that many of the people who do teach church school and/or serve on committees are very busy people. It is also clear to me that most of the people who give of their resources in a sacrificial manner to St. Michael and All Angels are people who have many other financial commitments. I have come to believe that generosity of time, talent and resources is both a theological and spiritual indicator of the health of our souls.

Many people think of the church as a place where they receive. They are baptized, married and have the Burial Office read over them in church. People send their children to church school to receive Christian Education. People come to church to receive communion. We believe that we receive

the gift of salvation through the community we call church. Many communicants, in any given parish, view the parish as a place where they have the "right" to receive various services from the parish.

My late friend, the Reverend William Sloan Coffin, once said, "There is no smaller package in all the world than that of a man (person) all wrapped up in himself (herself)." Focusing on receiving often leads us to a very selfish posture. It is as if the more we focus on getting what we believe we want the smaller we become. We move not toward shalom, but into a kind of "spiritual consumerism" which is never satisfied. The more we move outside of ourselves toward the other, the more we give, the more human we become, the more we know the peace that is generosity.

One of the great paradoxes of faith, for the modern mind, is that it is only in the giving of our time, talents and resources that we encounter the shalom which we thought we could find through our own seeking to receive more and more. Faith leads us to know that it is "more blessed to give than to receive."
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According to an article published in the October, 2006 issue of *The Economist*, a recent study by the National Institute

of Neurological Disorders and Stroke has shown that donating engages the part of the brain that plays a role in the bonding behavior between mother and child, and in romantic love. This involves oxytocin, a hormone that increases trust and cooperation. Trust and cooperation in any parish are increased by giving.

Archbishop Romero was correct, "Peace is generosity".

Martin Luther King, Jr. once said that, "If a man hasn't discovered something that he will die for, he isn't fit to live." Our willingness to give of ourselves—become generous—enables us to become more fully human. It is not an overstatement to say that there are many generous people in the St. Michael and All Angels community. However, there are also those in our community who have a serious spiritual problem in relation to generosity. A large part of our

parish budget is carried on the shoulders of about 20 pledging units. We often have to turn to these same busy people to serve on important parish committees. Our annual stewardship campaign (Consecration Sunday) offers us at St. Michael and All Angels an opportunity through prayer, reflection and fasting to address the question of generosity, a question central to our spiritual health, and the question that can guide us into becoming the generous community that God longs for us to become.

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

INTERSECTION OF ISLAMAPHOBIA AND TORTURE

Submitted by Betsy Hailey, Peace and Justice Chair

A program on the "Intersection of Islamophobia and Torture" will be held on Sunday, Oct. 25, from 3 to 5 p.m. at St. John's Pro-Cathedral, 514 West Adams, calling on people of faith and conscience to come together to learn, pray, build community and take action in relation to U.S.-sponsored torture.

Keynote speakers will be Dr. Malek Moazzam-Doulat, Religious Studies Department, Occidental College, and Dr. Maher Hathout, Senior Advisor, Muslim Public Affairs Council. The Rev. Canon Daniel Ade, Vice Dean and Vicar of the Congregation of St. John's, will lead an interfaith prayer.

The program will examine the demonization of people from the Middle East since 9-11 by the use of phrases such as "Islam-

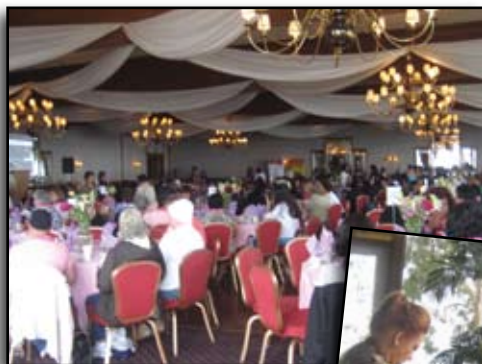
terrorist" and "Islamofascist"—attitudes which lay the groundwork for cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment and government-sponsored torture.

The program is sponsored by the Los Angeles Region Religious Campaign Against Torture, the Islamic Shura Council of Southern California, and the Christian-Muslim Consultative Group of Southern California and co-sponsored by ICUJP (Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace), the Program Group on Ecumenical and Interreligious Concerns of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles, and PCU (Progressive Christians Uniting).

For further information, please contact Betsy Hailey (efhailey@aol.com or 818-763-7827).

St. Michael's Wig Project *By Louisa Herrmann, Committee Chair*

From the Project Room: St. Michael's Wig Exchange is such a worthwhile and rewarding project. We get to see the results in June when Marisol Saens, the Latino Program Coordinator at the Wellness Community put on a lovely luncheon for Latino ladies called *Mujeres Unidas* which was held this year at the Odyssey Restaurant.



Above: Luncheon at the Odyssey Restaurant.
Right: Louisa, Treadwell, and Diane Collins Setting up.
Photos courtesy of Jenny Chavez.



We set up our wigs and mirrors at long tables. Some of the ladies were quite depressed when they arrived and left with a smile upon receiving a wig

that suited them well. We all enjoy fitting them with wigs that flatter them and make them feel good.

The wigs are donated by the Studios (Disney, etc.) and also by the Wellness Community which were used and returned. The St. Michael's ladies and children set about washing, rinsing, conditioning, drying and brushing them out. Then donating them once again.

At the end of the day we feel fulfilled and useful. Come join us.



Jenny Chavez (Jose's wife), Diane Collins, Andre and Louisa Herrmann)



From the Vestry *Betty Ferrell, Senior Warden; John Pryor, Junior Warden*

When I Grow Up



Anne Kelly and Margie Mullen of the Stewardship Committee asked me to share my experience of stewardship through this issue of the newsletter. I considered several things I wanted to say, but I decided I could best express my thoughts on Stewardship by sharing my experiences of knowing one of our parishioners, Nancy Woods.

When I first came to St. Michael's in 2000, Nancy was one of the first people I met. I actually don't know when we were first introduced, but I do recall seeing Nancy often at St. Michael's. I was so taken by Nancy's dedication to the church, her involvement in so many activities and

by her humble, gentle presence. I recall listening as Nancy lead a prayer during a meeting and being so moved by her faith, trust in God and her grace. I remember thinking that one of the reasons I decided to become a member of St. Michael's is that I wanted to be like Nancy.

Years later (as you can see, I must be stalking Nancy because I have been watching her for years!), I remember Nancy commenting that she likes to put her pledge offering envelope in the offering plate because she likes to watch it go up the aisle to the altar, knowing that her gift is a sacred act, a measure of her faith and a way of giving thanks to God for our parish. Again, I thought, I want to be like Nancy.

Over the past year I have seen Nancy give of herself—being at the church at 4 a.m. for "Get on the Bus", organizing ushers, taking communion to those confined to home,

washing wigs, and yes—placing her pledge envelope in the plate and watching it go up the aisle.

There are many "Nancys" in our parish. They are the people who give back to God and to our parish because of their love for both, and because they know that Stewardship is our way of putting our prayers and faith into action by giving of our money and of our time.

This time of year when we are asked to pledge our support for our parish is a time when we are called to think about our lives, what is important, what we believe in. I believe in the future of St. Michael's and that we have much work to do as we listen to God's call.

I also know that when I grow up, I want to be like Nancy.

Betty Ferrell, Senior Warden



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

	<i>August Actual</i>	<i>August Budget</i>	<i>YTD Actual</i>	<i>YTD Budget</i>
Total Revenues:	\$ 39,157	\$ 42,811	\$ 226,338	\$ 259,626
Total Expenses:	\$ 32,263	\$ 39,118	\$ 301,862	\$ 353,751
Net Total:	\$ 6,893	\$ 3,693	(\$ 75,525)	(\$ 94,125)

As stewardship and year-end approach, the Finance Committee has already started discussing 2010 and 2011 expenses, especially the additional expenses we expect to incur related to the search for a new and permanent rector. Those expenses include the parish-wide survey, which will guide the search committee in selecting a new rector.

In addition, the salary costs of a new rector are likely to be significantly more than the reduced package we are currently paying Father Atkins. We must comply with the diocesan-mandated salary structure based on the number of pledging families and the number of years the candidate has been a priest: the smaller the parish, the smaller the salary package, the smaller

the salary package, the less experienced the priest. Based on this year's number of pledging families, which is only 85 (with 5 of those having paid nothing so far this year), the chances of getting someone with the experience and preaching skills of Henry Atkins are few and far between.

If the giving stays at the current levels, our pledge and plate income will not even cover the rector's salary package plus our property maintenance and repairs. Our investment income is greatly reduced due to the decreased value of our investments, so that is not a significant source of income. That leaves the facility rental and preschool income to pay for all the other expenses, including office staff, program staff, church school materials, etc. to say

nothing of our commitment to the community to help provide services to those in need.

We know that these are difficult times, but St. Michael's, as we know it, will have to be significantly scaled down in order to have expenses eventually match income. There is just no graceful way of saying it, unfortunately.

Now is the time for all of us to prayerfully consider our pledges and when we do pledge, to increase our pledges. If we believe in the future of our parish, we can recruit an excellent rector and continue to grow the church.

Margie Mullen, Treasurer



The Calendar

October, 2009

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 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.
- Choirsters meet in the Music Room at 10:30 am, and the children are brought into Eucharist for the Peace.
- Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 AM service unless otherwise noted.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Locations: CO: Church Office CR: Choir Room FR: Fireside Room PH: Parish Hall UR: Upper Room YL: Youth Lounge S: Sanctuary				1 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR)	2 12:00 NOON Fourth Quarter (CO)	3
4 Women's Care Cottage Clothing Collection 9:00 AM Men's Group Morning Prayer 10:30 AM Blessing of the Animals 12:15 PM Healing Prayer (FR) 12:15 PM Holiday Cheer! Planning Mtg (PH) 6:00 PM Vestry Stewardship Dinner	5	6 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO) 7:00 PM Executive Committee (CO) 7:30 PM Community Outreach Projects Committee (UR)	7	8 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR)	9	10 8:00 PM Lit.UP! (PH)
11 New Consecration Sunday 12:00 PM New Consecration Sunday Luncheon (PH)	12	13 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO) 7:00 PM Finance Committee (CO)	14 7:00 PM Bioneers (PH)	15 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR)	16	17
18 Bread for the World Sunday 12:15 PM Healing Prayer (FR) 12:30 PM Youth Group (YL)	19	20 10:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO) 7:00 PM Vestry Meeting (UR) <i>November '09 Newsletter Articles DUE</i>	21	22 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR)	23	24
25	26 10:00 AM & 7:00 PM Prayer Shawl Knitting Groups (FR)	27	28	29 11:00 AM Staff Meeting (CO) 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal (CR)	30	31 Halloween

GOINGS ON AT ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH

Thanksgiving for a Job Well Done

To: **Jane Wilson** for all the Angel Awards work, and especially the following helpers:

Karen Rogers and **Alex Morales** for heavy duty work in the kitchen,

The **youth** who served as waiters,

Treadwell Atkins, Charlotte Oliver, Catherine Wagar, and **Susan Guire** for sewing seat covers (and anyone else who sewed into the wee hours!!),

The **Men's Group** for their Saturday cleanings, and **Julian Bull** for his continued work on the Bishop Suffragan Search Committee.

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.

Even Clergy Need to Take a Break!

Father Atkins and Treadwell shop for souvenirs at Balboa Island, Newport Beach, CA. Photo courtesy of Margie Mullen.



November 2009 MIKE Deadline: Please send copy and/or pictures via e-mail to lauren@stmikessc.org by Tuesday, October 20. If you don't have a computer, bring your articles to the Parish Office by that time.

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!

Quotation for October

"If everyone in your church followed your pattern of giving, would your church receive a token, a tip or a tithe?"

Brian Kluth, Pastor and Generosity Speaker & Author

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.

October Birthdays

Day	Name
5	Bruce Rankin
6	Irene Gibson
13	Emily Magers
15	Marjie Hathaway
16	Rodney Dickson
18	Peter Stenquist
24	Colleen Bendall James Benjamin
29	Kristyne Moulton
31	Kyra Grace

October Anniversaries

Day	Name
1	Karen & Bill Haddock
10	Melissa & Dave Basta
14	Sharon & Claude Swonger
24	Louisa and Claude Herrmann

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



An Evening with Ed Begley, Jr.

By Betsy Foldes Meiman

On Wednesday, September 2nd, The Bioneers SFV (San Fernando Valley) kicked off their new season with an evening with Ed Begley Jr. in St. Mike's parish hall entitled, "Live Simply So That Others May Simply Live." Eighty people, including Los Angeles City Councilman, Paul Koretz, came to hear the accomplished actor and

environmental activist speak on a variety of environmental issues and personal experiences with going green.

Over the evening, Ed mapped his course from just starting down the green path in 1970 in order to honor his father, the Academy award winning actor, Ed Begley, to becoming the "green avenger" (my word not his!) that he is today. He described his father as a nature lover and unwitting environmentalist, whose experiences during The Great Depression had led him to practice what we often hear as the environmentalist mantra today: "reduce, re-use, recycle." Mr. Begley started with the book *50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth*, by John Javna with the intention of doing a few things and soon had done all fifty without breaking a sweat.

Ed compares his method for achieving a low carbon footprint lifestyle to a fruit laden tree. Pick the low (and cheap) hanging fruit first—such as when your regular bulbs burn out, replace them with compact fluorescent lights, composting; then the middle fruit (mid cost)—such as installing energy-efficient thermostats; and finally the big changes at the top of the tree—such as installing solar and gray water systems, and wind turbines. The most important thing is to just start.

Mr. Begley shared entertaining stories of living with his reluctantly green yet supportive wife, Rachelle Carson, and their family's experience of filming their *Living with Ed* reality series for Discovery's *Planet Green* channel. Rachelle adds the chic to Ed's eco as well as the voice of the every person of "you want to do what now?" Interestingly, being green has saved him a lot of green. He spends about \$300 a year in electric bills, which he seems to think would go down about a hundred bucks if his daughter and wife didn't use the hair dryer—that's a lotta hair.

Half of Ed's presentation was a Q and A. He graciously and candidly answered questions personal, environmental and activist. He stayed to sign his books *Living Like Ed*, and *Ed Begley's Guide to Sustainable Living*. He can be reached via his website, www.EdBegley.com, where you will find a lot of useful information.

From the parishioners that came to participate, to Bonnie Winings and Shepley Winings Public Relations group for their PR work, to Lauren Azeltine who designed the banner, and to Father Atkins for being at the planning meetings, thank you, and to St. Mike's for hosting Bioneers SFV.

The Bioneers is a national hub of social and scientific innovators from all over the world who bring practical and visionary solutions for the world's most pressing environmental and social challenges. Its acclaimed annual national and local conferences are complemented by extensive media outreach including an award-winning radio series, book series, and a role in media projects such as Leonardo DiCaprio's film *The 11th Hour*. Look for monthly events at our parish hall. Our next meeting is Wednesday, October 14th at 7:00 pm.



Ed signing books in parish hall.



Ed with Tala Rezai of *Fashionable Earth*

Newcomers Party

Bill & Karen Haddock Host Most Recent Potluck on September 19 (photos courtesy of Margie Mullen)



Steve Wright



Fr. Atkins with Marj Carhart and Karen Haddock



Marj Carhart, Catherine Wagar, Eileen Carhart

St. Michael's Community Outreach Projects

By Jane Wilson, Committee Chair

THE ANGEL AWARD DINNER

The dinner and ceremony on September 12th were a huge success. Thanks to all who supported this great evening. A complete report and MORE pictures will be featured in the next newsletter!

LIT.UP!

Our October 10, Lit.UP! theme is SCARY MONSTERS, and will star the following performers: Jim Woster, Cheryl Compton, Vance Sanders, David Feldman (writer for Dennis Miller and Bill Maher), Coleen Wainwright, Janet Varney (host of *Dinner and a Movie*), April Richardson and St. Mike's own Betsy Meiman. The charity for which we are raising funds in EDAR. EDAR (Everyone Deserves A Roof) is a 501(c)(3) charity that provides unique mobile shelters to those living on the streets all around us. Each EDAR is a four-wheeled mobile unit which carries belongings and facilitates recycling during the day and which unfolds into a special, framed tent-like sleeping enclosure with a bed at night. <http://www.edar.org/index.html>. Remember, we have free child-care, delicious dessert and a great show for only \$10!

HOLIDAY CHEER MEETING

We will be meeting to plan this year's Holiday Cheer party (taking place on December 12th, so mark your calendars!). The meeting will be immediately following church (noonish) on Sunday, October 4th, in the Parish Hall as coffee hour winds down.

GET INVOLVED IN SMCOP!

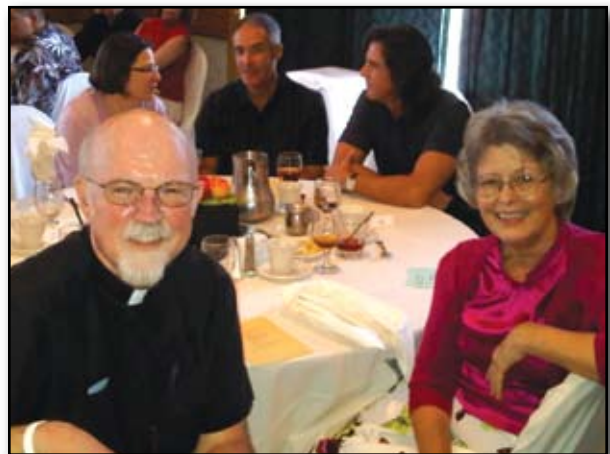
Our next meeting is Tuesday, November 6th in the Upper Room at 7:30 p.m. We need you in all our exciting holiday and winter endeavors. Contact Jane Wilson at 818.343.8438 for more information.



ANGEL AWARDS. Pictured: Top Atkins' neighbor Neda preparing auction items. Bottom: Avery Wright and Betty Ferrell covering chairs for the event. Photos courtesy of Treadwell Atkins..



Pictured (L to R) at Angel Awards: Bruce Rankin, Margie & Liz Mullen.



Father Atkins and his lovely wife, Treadwell, at the Angel Awards. Photos courtesy of Margie Mullen.

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

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Leonard Harman
Mary Ann Jacobson
Norma Johnson
Ed Sugar

PARISH STAFF

Priest-In-Charge The Rev. Canon Henry L. Atkins, Jr.
(fratkings@stmikessc.org)
Priest Associate The Rev. Julian Bull (bullj@campbellhall.org)
Deacon The Rev. Catherine Wagar (ctswagar2@aol.com)
Parish Administrator Duane Steadman (administrator@stmikessc.org)
Director of Music Kristen Toedtman (kristentoedtman@gmail.com)
Choristers Director Ellen Gerstell (egborff@yahoo.com)
Communications Coordinator Lauren Azeltine (lauren@stmikessc.org)

The MIKE staff:
Publisher Lauren Azeltine
Editor Emeritus Soni Wright
Office Volunteers Kathryn Argall Mary Ann Jacobson
Treadwell Atkins Norma Johnson
Phyllis Bracey Liz Mullen

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.