



# The Mike

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

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## Reading the Book of Acts

By the Reverend Dan Justin

**W**e have celebrated the glory of Easter. The stone has been rolled away. We are now in the midst of the great fifty days of Easter. You may have noticed that our scripture lessons on Sunday mornings have taken an interesting shift. The Old Testament lesson has been replaced by a reading from the Acts of the Apostles. In addition, Stefanie and I are regularly preaching on the book of Acts during this season. Why?

The book of Acts is an interesting book of the Bible. We are not always sure what to make of it. It is not a Gospel like Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. It is not a letter like the Epistles of St. Paul, St. Peter, or St. James. It is not a sermon like Hebrews or prophecy like the Revelation. Acts seems like a book of history—a narrative which tells us how the earliest followers of Jesus lived, organized themselves, and spread out with their message across the known world. But the history we read in Acts does not always match up with the accounts we read in other places in the New Testament. We call the book “The Acts of the Apostles” but is that the best name for it? It is only about a couple of Apostles. Most of the original twelve don’t show up in the book. The first half of the book is about Peter. The second half is about Paul. Mixed in we get some cameo appearances from James. We are also introduced to new people who were not apostles. So what is Acts?

**A**cts is actually the second part of a two-volume work of literature. Volume one is the Gospel of Luke. The same author who wrote Luke also wrote Acts. They were intended to be read together as a consistent narrative. The two volumes—Luke and Acts—have a consistent theology, style, and message. Both books were written to a person named Theophilus (there are many theories on the identity of Theophilus, but those are beyond the scope of this article). Some have argued that Luke is the story of Jesus and that Acts is the story of the Holy Spirit. Acts is not actually intended to be a book of history. Rather, Luke wrote Acts as a book of theology—but that theology is told on the stage of history. The book is far more interested in theology than history. Of course,

we do learn a great deal of history from Acts, but history is not the primary goal.

Acts is a bridge between the Gospels and the Epistles of the New Testament. Acts reveals how the followers of Jesus were transformed and empowered



by the Holy Spirit; how they spread out sharing the Good News of God in Christ. Acts shows how the church came to be and how it ordered itself. Acts explains how this group of Jesus’ disciples came to be the new community

God always intended. Without reading Acts we cannot hope to understand the rest of the New Testament. In fact, without reading Acts, we cannot fully comprehend the story of Salvation presented through the entire Bible. That means the story told from Genesis to Revelation cannot be comprehended without reading Acts! It is Acts that connects the Old Testament to the New and the Gospels to the Epistles. Finally, Acts reveals what it means to be witnesses for Christ—a task still included in every Christian’s job description.

So that is why we read this book in the season of Easter. Both because it connects the glorious events of the Gospels to the remaining portions of scripture, and because at the end of the Gospel stories, Jesus tells his followers that we are to be his witnesses to the entire world. But for Episcopalians this can be a scary thought. It brings us to the “E” word that so many tend to fear: Evangelism.

**I**n our baptismal covenant we vow to “Proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ.” This is our post-Easter mission given to us by the Risen Christ. But the idea of evangelism makes us uncomfortable. It brings to mind those who knock on doors or hand out tracts. We think of those who are always trying to convince everyone to believe the way they believe. We conjure up images of those who are self-righteous and who tell everyone to repent or burn. But that is not

what evangelism really is.

Evangelism is nothing more than the willingness to share your story of gratitude for God’s grace in your life. It is based on our deep delight in the community of the church and our love for God. It is grounded on the understanding that God loves each and every person—after all, the criteria for being God’s beloved is to be born a human being.

**W**e never know what might happen when we have the opportunity to share our stories of gratitude for God’s grace in our lives. This is a spiritual practice so our trust must be in the Holy Spirit. We don’t have any hidden agenda. Our goal in being witnesses to God’s amazing love is not that someone will convert or even that they will join St. Michael’s. Our job is to be witnesses. The best way to do that is by sharing our stories. The Holy Spirit is present and active in the lives of people. We never know what may happen. Perhaps your story will touch another’s heart. Perhaps your sharing will encourage them. Maybe that person will want to know more about the faith. Maybe someone will want to come to St. Michael’s and join the community. Maybe any number of things will happen. But what happens when we share the Good News of God in Christ and our delight in God’s grace is not our business. That is God’s job. Only God knows why you were there to share with that particular person at that particular time. We have no way of knowing what God is doing in another person’s life. Our role is to be witnesses. That means sharing our stories of gratitude for God’s grace in our lives. The Spirit’s role is to do the rest.

The Acts of the Apostles is filled with tales of people sharing their stories of God’s grace in Jesus Christ. In Acts, the Holy Spirit uses those moments to do amazing things. As we read the book of Acts this year, let us remember Christ’s call to be his witnesses. Let us no longer fear the “E” word. After all, we are only telling our stories of God’s grace to those we love.

Blessings,  
Dan+

## The Choir Starts Its Summer Schedule on May 29

By David Connors

The full choir will be with us as we celebrate Pentecost on May 15th and then Trinity Sunday on May 22nd. At that time the choir will go on summer schedule. This means that, for most Sundays during the summer, there will be a cantor helping to lead the singing of hymns and service music. The cantor also will sing an Offertory anthem.

The full choir, however, will return for one Sunday in each of the months of June, July, and August. These three Sundays with the full choir are June 19th, July 17th, and August 21st (the third Sunday of each month).

If you are interested in seeing what it is like to sing with the choir, these three summer Choir Sundays would be a great opportunity. On those Sundays, the choir will meet in the sanctuary to rehearse the hymns and service music for the day. All are welcome to join us.

Looking ahead to the fall, the choir always resumes rehearsing on the Thursday after Labor Day. This year that falls on Thursday, September 8th. We will rehearse in the Choir Room from 7:15-9:15pm. The following Sunday, September 11th, the choir returns in full force. If you are interested in joining the choir, please contact me and I will be happy to answer any questions that you might have. I may be reached at david.connors@calstatela.edu.

## A Word from Our Children's Pastor

By Amber Russo

Summer is just around the corner, and the children at St. Michael's are putting on their flip flops and looking forward to some fun in the sun. Even though they will be taking a break from their school work, we hope to see their bright faces in church on Sundays. Our Sunday School will take its regular summer break with our last day being Sunday, June 5th. As always, we are planning fun activities and games for the kids that will coincide with Sunday worship.

Sunday School will resume on Sunday, August 21st. We will be back with our creative lesson plans that allow the children to engage and hear the same Bible stories their parents are hearing in church. We also look forward to hearing the children sing in church in the new year. Stay cool this summer, and we look forward to sharing it with you!

Please be sure to let me know if you have any questions.

## Christopher Montella to be Ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons

I am thrilled to share this news with you. Christopher Montella, who completed his one-year field education placement here at St. Michael and All Angels, will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons at 10:00 am, Saturday, June 4th, at St. John's Pro-Cathedral. Christopher is being sponsored for ordination by All Saints' Episcopal Church in Beverly Hills. He will serve as a deacon for a period of six months after which he will be ordained to the priesthood. Many of us have been blessed by Christopher's ministry among us. I hope to have a very large St. Michael's cheering section at the ordination on June 4th.



If you are unable to attend the ordination, don't worry. You will have a wonderful opportunity to greet and congratulate Christopher the very next day. He will be serving as deacon for his very first time right here at St. Michael's. He will serve as both deacon and preacher at our services on Sunday, June 5th.

This is an exciting time for Christopher. Please hold him in your prayers as he prepares for his ordination.

*"Almighty God, the giver of all good gifts, in your divine providence you have appointed various orders in your Church: Give your grace, we humbly pray, to all who are now called to any office and ministry for your people; and so fill them with the truth of your doctrine and clothe them with holiness of life, that they may faithfully serve before you, to the glory of your great Name and for the benefit of your holy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen." (BCP, pg. 256)*

Blessings,  
Dan+

## The Rev. Hannah Atkins Nominated to be Bishop of Western North Carolina

The Diocese of Western North Carolina released its slate of nominees for the next bishop of that diocese. There is a familiar name on the list. The Rev. Hannah Atkins, daughter of our former Priest-in-Charge, Henry Atkins, is one of the four nominees. Hannah is currently the Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. Highlights of her ministry include deepening partnerships with homeless and immigrant populations, developing quality programming for children and youth, welcoming new Christians to the faith, heightening the connection between the church and the arts, and community building across opinions and through conflict while sharing Christ's life-changing love. If you are interested in learning more about Hannah and the other candidates, and/or in following this election please visit the bishop search website: <http://bishopsearchwnc.org/>.



Please keep Hannah, and the Diocese of Western North Carolina, in your prayers as they discern and elect their next bishop.

*"Almighty God, giver of every good gift: look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a bishop for the Diocese of Western North Carolina, that they may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip them for their ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." (BCP, pg. 818)*

And while we are thinking about the elections of bishops, please keep the Diocese of Los Angeles and the election of our own next bishop in your prayers as well.

Blessings,  
Dan+

## Treasurer's Corner

### March 2016—Revenue and Expense Summary

	March Actual	March Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenue	\$ 35,659	\$ 35,863	\$117,875	\$107,588
Total Expense	40,752	36,616	118,613	109,849
Net	\$( 5,066)	\$( 753)	\$( 738)	\$( 2,261)

# From the Vestry

*Tina Wilson, Senior Warden  
Ron Schwartz, Junior Warden*



**T**hankful celebration and God's joyous spirit abounds! The glory of Easter stills surrounds us. We celebrated the Great Easter Vigil, the Day of Resurrection, and now, we await in anticipation for the arrival of Pentecost and celebrating the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. There is so much to be thankful for this Easter Season!



Father Dan successfully defended his thesis, completing his Doctor of Ministry degree which will be bestowed this May! We give thanks, and are so proud of his recent accomplishment. We are ever so blessed to have his spiritual leadership. Congratulations to the Reverend Doctor Dan Justin.

On Sunday, June 5th, we welcome Christopher Montella, our former seminarian who will be preaching here at St Michael's. Christopher will be ordained to the Sacred Order of Deacons on June 4, 2016.

Our parish life ministry invites families and friends to our NEW summer family evenings with movie night on the greens and fun-filled family activities. Join us, catch up with old friends, and meet new ones. It is a great chance to introduce your

friends and family to the St. Michael's Community, especially those with children. Watch for dates and more details in our calendar and weekly Sunday bulletins.

Our outreach ministry extends an invitation to you to join the upcoming visit to MEND (Meet Each Need with Dignity) on May 14th at 10:00 am. This will be an opportunity to tour the facility and meet with site staff. There are also opportunities to volunteer during the summer as a mentor or teen role model for elementary and middle schoolers.

Get On The Bus, a program that takes children to visit their parent in prison is right around the corner. Look for sign-up sheets at the back of the church and in the Ministry Center.

As we continue to celebrate the remaining days of this joyous Easter season and in anticipation of Pentecost, we encourage you to take time to celebrate, reflect, and connect with one another and we hope that you will join us in one, if not all, of the activities and events scheduled over the late spring and early summer.

We look forward to seeing you!

## Graduations

### Doctor of Ministry Degree Completed

**F**or the past three years I have spent most of the month of June at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. This month I will travel to Minnesota one final time—not to attend class, but to participate in the graduation ceremony. I have now completed my Doctor of Ministry degree.



I want to thank you, my parish family, for your support during this time. Not only did the parish provide generous financial support, making the completion of this academic program possible, you also participated in the program. You patiently completed surveys four weeks in a row. The results of these formed the backbone of my doctoral thesis. Some members of the parish participated in the Parish Response Group. This small group met on Saturday mornings and Sundays after church approximately four times each year of the program. They provided essential feedback regarding my preaching. I also thank Don Browne for his constant support and interest in my program. He provided numerous and important doctoral dissertations for my review. His participation saved me hours and hours of time researching in the library. I also want to thank Duane Steadman for his constant support and encouragement over the past three years.

So, thank you all again. I thoroughly enjoyed this program. I am confident that I have grown as a preacher over the course of these three years.

Blessings,  
Dan+

### Nikolay Best to Graduate from High School

**N**ikolay Best will be graduating this June from high school at Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies (SOCES).



He attended Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies (SOCES) for five years, transferring at the beginning of his 8th grade year. He is an active member of the drama program as both an actor and stage crew, a member of the International Thespian Society, varsity swim team, and staff on the school year book. Nikolay attended Haynes Elementary in West Hills PreK-5 and Woodland Hills Academy for Middle School. Throughout his education he excelled in writing, sports, and theater. He hopes to apply these skills as he moves on to college.

Nikolay joined St. Michael's in 2012 with his family—parents Tina Wilson and Jennifer Best, siblings Vitaly and Masha, and his grandmother Mary. St Michael's has been a strong anchor in Nikolay's life. He served as an acolyte and is an active member of the youth group. (Admittedly, he is hoping that there will soon be an active younger adult group for those 18-21.) His fondest memories include the Bishops' Ball and acolyte Olympics. Nikolay explained, "I really like the church. I love the people in the church. I love being part of the Youth Group and the sense of unity with the people in the church."

This Fall Nikolay will be attending Pierce College and working on requirements for a degree in kinesiology with a possible career in sports medicine. While at Pierce, he plans to pursue his passion for sports, joining the Pierce College swim team.

It has been an amazing 18 years for Nikolay thus far and he is looking forward to what the future holds. We are so proud of all his hard work and accomplishments and our family is so thankful for the support, love, and nurturing that he has received from our parish family!

# Member Spotlight

By Sharrell Treat

*This is an occasional column with short profiles of our members.*

## Jackie and Ted Eckberg

Jackie was born and spent her early childhood in northern Illinois. She moved to Milwaukee during high school. Ted was born in Milwaukee and raised in the farming country west of that city. We met at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Both of us graduated from UW and Jackie worked as a math specialist in the Department of Chemistry as Ted finished medical school. Further study and Navy duty caused us to live in Indiana and Tennessee before setting up practice in Montana. In 1966 we moved to Los Angeles to obtain specialized care for one of our sons. We have four children, all living in the LA area. Much of our spare time has been spent working on advocacy for developmentally disabled people on a local, state, and even national basis.

Jackie first came to St. Michael's after the closure of the Welsh Presbyterian Church in downtown LA where she spent many years as an elder as well as being Clerk of Session. Ted left another church to join her about a year later.

## John Schouweiler and Ann Hamilton

They have been attending St. Michael's on and off since they moved to Studio City in 1988.



John was born in Reno, Nevada, and came to Los Angeles for law school at USC. After working in business affairs, he became a producer for mostly low budget movies, including *Gods and Monsters*.

Ann was raised in Staunton, Virginia, and arrived in LA to attend graduate film school at UCLA. She and John met working for low-budget movie master Roger Corman. She has written for television and film and her first novel, *Expecting*, was published in the summer of 2014.

Their son Max is a graduate of Cal State Northridge and works in movie production. Daughter Lucy is a freshman at Boston University studying marine science and music.

## William and Doreen Dean

William (Bill) Dean and his wife Doreen became members of St. Michael's parish in 1959. They were to attend the last Sunday morning service held in the former stables, which had been turned into the sanctuary.

Bill was born in the city of Liverpool in the British Isles. He became a choir boy, server, and acolyte at the family's local Anglican church. His mother was widowed when she was young and was left with a baby boy and his two young brothers to care for.

During his teens, Bill was apprenticed to become a mechanic and machinist and was later to become a recognized mechanical engineer in Britain.

With his young wife Doreen, they immigrated to the United States and on to California in April 1956.

Bill has been a member of our vestry and held the position of Senior Warden during the great flood that damaged the church in February 1980.

He was a member of the parish building committee for the design and construction of the existing sanctuary. He has willingly served the parish on numerous past committees and events. Bill and Doreen have two sons, David and Robert, and also three grandchildren, Julia, Thomas, and Douglas. Bill and Doreen have both been active in scouting and their two sons and grandsons all attained the rank of Eagle Scout.

Bill and Doreen have enjoyed ballroom dancing throughout their marriage and have traveled to historic places.

Bill is a state-registered mechanical engineer in California, active in his professional engineering society. He was elected to Fellow grade member in the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and became a vice president for the Pacific region of ASME. He has been involved in many engineering projects throughout California and the United States.

Bill and Doreen became naturalized citizens in 1981—a period of 55 years.

## Lauren and Brett Wong

Over the past three years I have been blessed to be a parish member at St. Michael and All Angels. Growing up in the San Fernando Valley, I had



driven past the church campus for many years, always thinking how lovely it looked set against the hillside. In 2013, I felt the call to become a member of a church community for a variety of reasons. The lovely image of that hillside church, on Coldwater Canyon, came to mind. The first Sunday I attended a service at St. Michael's I was approached by a few parish members who issued warm welcomes to me. I spoke several times with Father Dan and soon started processing through the steps to join the congregation formally. Eventually, I was baptized at St. Michael's. My son, Brett, who was baptized in the Catholic faith, was later confirmed, along with myself, at St. Michael's. I am currently a member of the church choir which fills my heart with great joy, singing praises to God.

Going back to my university years, I majored in journalism and minored in music. I hold a BA in journalism from CSUN. Upon graduation, I worked in the entertainment industry for the bulk of my employment years. My first job was as a music critic for local newspapers as well as some national magazines. Later, office jobs followed at music and film companies. My last industry job was on the Fox lot where I worked for four years as an administrative assistant. Eventually, I left the industry in favor of a 9am to 5pm non-entertainment job. As a parent, I needed employment which did not require evening/weekend hours. Currently, my title is customer relations manager for a security company.

I would like to end this profile by saying that being part of the parish community at St. Michael and All Angels has enriched my life spiritually, enabled me to grow my faith and find a more solid foundation within myself as a person.

# Holy Week and Easter

March 20-27, 2016





# The Calendar

May 2016

**Sunday Schedule** • *Sunday Services are 8:00 am (no choir) and 10:30 am (with choir) in the Sanctuary.*  
 • *Adult Learning Opportunity begins at 9:15 in the Ministry Center*  
 • *Sunday School begins at 10:30; 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
<b>1</b> Easter 6 11:30 am Sunday Sack Lunches (MC) 11:30 am Youth Group (L)	<b>2</b> St. Philip & St. James 6:30 pm Book Discussion Group (Woods Home)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> Ascension Day 7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Easter 7 <i>Mothers' Day</i> 9:00 am St. Michael's Outreach (FR)	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> 10:00 am St. Michael's Outreach trip to MEND 1:00 pm Concerned United Birthparents (FR)
<b>15</b> Pentecost	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> 7:00 pm Vestry (L)	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> 7:15 pm Choir Rehearsal (MR)	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Trinity 11:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry (MC)	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Pentecost 2	<b>30</b> Memorial Day	<b>31</b>				

**Locations:**  
 CO Church Office  
 MR Music Room  
 FR Fireside Room  
 MC Ministry Center  
 L The Loft (formerly the stage)  
 S Sanctuary

## May Birthdays

3 Lise Friedman  
 3 Jackson Armstrong  
 3 Matilda Armstrong  
 7 Bodhi Dominguez-Reis  
 11 Maddie Charlton  
 13 Henry Venable

15 Amanda Schwartz  
 18 Lois Vaughan  
 19 Brooks Taylor  
 21 Ted Eckberg  
 23 Anna Wilson  
 23 Amber Russo

28 Barbara King  
 30 Aiden Fields  
 31 Bonnie Winings

## May Anniversaries

20 Jenni & Nick Hernandez  
 26 Don & Norma Johnson



# The Calendar

June 2016

**Sunday Schedule**

- Sunday Services are 8:00 am (no choir) and 10:30 am (with choir) in the Sanctuary.
- Adult Learning Opportunity begins at 9:15 in the Ministry Center
- Sunday School begins at 10:30; the children are brought into Eucharist for the Peace.
- Sunday School will be on break starting June 12. It will resume August 21.
- Coffee Hour immediately follows the 10:30 am service unless otherwise noted.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Locations:</i></p> <p>CO Church Office</p> <p>MR Music Room</p> <p>FR Fireside Room</p> <p>MC Ministry Center</p> <p>L The Loft (formerly the stage)</p> <p>S Sanctuary</p> </div>						
<b>5</b> Pentecost 3 11:30 am Sunday Sack Lunches (MC) 11:30 am Youth Group (L)	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> St. Barnabas 1:00 pm Concerned United Birthparents (FR)
<b>12</b> Pentecost 4 9:00 am St. Michael's Outreach (FR)	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> Pentecost 5 <i>Fathers' Day</i>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 7:00 pm Vestry (L)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Nativity of St. John the Baptist	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Pentecost 6 11:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry (MC)	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> St. Peter & St. Paul	<b>30</b>		

## June Birthdays

4 Polly Davis	15 Everett Campbell	27 Dalton Taylor
4 Grace Murphy	16 John Vincent	30 Joan Dektar
9 Jack Beckner	20 William Venable III	
Leonard Harman	23 Mary Best	
12 Don DeRose	25 Annie Juzwiak-DeRose	
15 Karen Rogers	26 Emily Taylor	

## 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. Birthdays and Anniversaries will be celebrated on the last Sunday of each month.

# St. Michael and All Angels Church

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## ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



### VESTRY

Tina Wilson, *Senior Warden*  
Ron Schwartz, *Junior Warden*  
Jenni Hernandez, *Treasurer*  
Avi Aazami, *Clerk*  
Diane Ballowe  
Elizabeth Bartolomea  
Gail Green  
Karen Holleman  
Alex Morales  
Amber Russo  
Julie Bellevue Smollar  
Steven Wright

### PARISH STAFF

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**Priest Associate** The Rev. Stefanie Wilson Brown (wilsons@campbellhall.org)  
**Children's Pastor** Amber Russo (childrenspastor@stmikessc.org)  
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**Editor** David Connors  
**Editor Emerita** Soni Wright

### Vision Statement

*To be a welcoming, inclusive Christian community growing in faith through worship, prayer, study, and social action.*

### Our Mission Priority

*Our mission priority is to focus on the United Nations' First Millennium Goal: To eradicate extreme hunger and poverty.*