



The Mike

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

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The Season of Growth & the 20 + 1 + 6 Commitment

By the Reverend Dan Justin

The months of December through May are pretty exciting times in the church. Most of our major holidays and feast days are packed into that span of time. Most of our special seasons, which bring changes of color, style, and rhythm to our worship services, are found in those months. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter are all celebrated during that span of time. Once we hit Pentecost Sunday though, things get—well—ordinary.

From June until the end of November there are no real big celebratory seasons of time. Sure we get a few important Sundays along the way, but they only last one Sunday. That is why the season after Pentecost has come to be known as Ordinary Time. It is also known as the Great Green Season. This is because the liturgical color of this season is green. So should we be getting ready for a big yawner of a time or is there something more significant going on?

Actually, there is something really wonderful about Ordinary Time. It is the season of growth. That is the reason the color is green. It signifies our opportunity to slow ourselves down, to really reflect on the story we have been telling through our celebrations of the other seasons. It allows us to give ourselves time to grow deep roots in our faith. St. Paul, in his writings to the early church, compares growing in faith to feeding a baby. There is a time when a baby can only have milk. Eventually though, in order to grow, the baby must begin to eat solid food. We also know that we have to eat food that is good for us if we want to be strong. We must have a variety of servings of fruits and vegetables along with other foods that are healthy. We would never allow our children to only eat candy. In order to grow and be healthy they must eat the right things. The Green Season provides us with good food. We get a steady diet of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Epistles, and the Gospels which nourishes our faith and allows the Holy Spirit to slowly mold us and make us into the people God calls us to be.

Mountain top experiences are wonderful. The joy of Christmas and Easter provides

us beautiful celebrations in the church. But only the Great Green Season provides us the opportunity to find God in the ordinary places of life. Being a disciple of Jesus is no easy business. We are presented with choices each day as we encounter any number of situations in life in which we must face the question, "Will I be a disciple today? Will I act in love?" If we do not have deep roots of faith, we are unlikely to make the best choice when the time comes. The deep roots we need to sustain us are grown during ordinary time.



As you think about your summer, what plans do you have to utilize this time to grow in your faith? Allow me to make a suggestion: **Make a 20 + 1 + 6 Commitment for the 2016 Season of Growth.** What is the 20 + 1 + 6 Commitment? It is really very simple. It means...

- **20 minutes of prayer daily**
- **1 hour of worship weekly**
- **6 hours of service/ministry monthly**

Daily prayer, weekly worship, and time dedicated to service and ministry are the foundations of discipleship!

20 Minutes of Prayer Daily: The Book of Common Prayer provides a wonderful format for daily prayer. You can use the Daily Office for prayer in the morning, noonday, evening, or compline (just before bed). Alternatively, you can use the devotions for families at the same times of day. These are all found on pages 75 through 140 in your BCP.

1 Hour of Worship Weekly: Lucky for you St. Michael and All Angels gathers every Sunday for approximately one hour of worship each and every Sunday. You can attend either the 8:00 am or the 10:30 am service. But perhaps you are away on vacation or traveling. Lo and

behold! There is likely an Episcopal Church somewhere in the vicinity. If there is no Episcopal Church, try attending a Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Methodist service. You might even branch out and attend a totally different faith tradition's worship service. Regardless of whether you are here or away, commit to at least one hour of worship weekly.

6 Hours of Service/Ministry Monthly:

Volunteer at MEND or the North Hollywood Interfaith Food Pantry or some other place that serves the poor. Get involved in a ministry here at St. Michael's: Altar Guild, choir, acolytes, outreach, Sunday school, youth group, ushering, or anything else. Whatever your gifts, talents, and interests are, you can use them to serve. Commit to putting your faith in action at least 6 hours per week.

Need some ideas to keep you on track for your commitment? Try forming a small group. Have a conversation with your friends and fellow parishioners about your 20 + 1 + 6 Commitment. Meet a few times in person and talk about how it is going for you. Help hold each other accountable. Alternatively, (or in addition to), keep a journal. Write about your experiences. Log your time in a calendar. Keep track of what you are doing. Write about your feelings and about how you are growing. There are all sorts of creative ways you can help yourself keep on track. Let your imagination run wild!

Let's make this 2016 Season of Growth anything but ordinary! Join me in a commitment to spiritual growth through 20 minutes of prayer daily, one hour of worship weekly, and six hours of service/ministry monthly. Who knows what life will look like around here if we all do this all the way to Advent?

Blessings,
Dan+

Member Spotlight

By Sharrell Treat

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

Ron and Denise Schwartz

In August of 1973, Ron and Denise met at a church clean-up activity at St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church, where Denise's parents, Lt. Col. Bob and Bernice Fowler were members. They were married in March 1974 at St. Mark's in Van Nuys where they were active members until transferring to St. Michael's in 1991. Both have been involved in various committees and ministries at these two churches. Ron has served on the vestry at both churches, as well.



Currently Ron is Junior Warden, Minister of Ceremonies, chalice bearer, lay reader, and acolyte trainer. Denise is chair of the Memorial Assistance Planning Committee and enjoys tending the plants in the Memorial Garden. Ron and Denise are both on the Altar Guild.

Prior to Ron's current position as a substitute teacher for LAUSD, he was the owner of an Electronic Component Sales Company and

President of his social group Radio Pioneers. Denise is the Nutrition Support Coordinator at Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center, with

40+ years at the hospital. She is a speaker and author on the topic of patient-centered care and optimizing healthcare communication for decision making about choices dealing with the individual's quality-of-life goals. Denise is the Regent of her Daughters of the American Revolution Chapter.

They have three children and eight grandchildren: Robert is a teacher in Northern California, Tracy is a partner in a niche gym business in Chicago, and Amanda is an editor for an ad agency in Pasadena that caters to non-profit organizations.

Ron and Denise enjoy time at their home and visiting family in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. With all of their activities, they have seen God as the center of their lives and feel fortunate to be members of the St. Michael's community, especially with the weekly Bible Study Group with Fr. Dan Justin and taking the opportunity to read the Bible together daily

Vestry Votes to Increase Rector's Salary

Your vestry meets on the third Tuesday of every month. These meetings take place in the Ministry Center at 7:00 pm. The vestry reviews the current activities of the parish, plans for upcoming activities, monitors the budget and expenditures of the parish, and works toward accomplishing the mission and vision of the parish.

This year the vestry was asked to review the compensation package being offered our rector. The vestry organized a Compensation Committee to review current trends in the Episcopal Church, make comparisons with other local parishes, and review compensation packages being offered by parishes currently seeking a new rector. The vestry also received recommendations from Bishop Bruno.

After careful consideration the committee recommended and the vestry voted to increase the rector's compensation. The increase was effective April 1st, but was not retroactive.

This decision will have an effect on both this year's budget and future budgets. You will hear more about this during our annual stewardship program this fall and at the Annual Meeting in January. Your questions, comments, and concerns are most welcome. Please see Tina Wilson, Ron Schwartz, Jenni Hernandez, or Fr. Dan if you would like to have a conversation about this decision.

Summer Fun: Movie Nights on the Green



All are invited to join us for a few Friday evenings in the courtyard for movies under the stars. Bring a blanket or lawn chairs to sit

on, some snacks and drinks to share, friends and family. Popcorn and cotton candy will be available.

Movie nights will on Friday, July 15th, and Friday, August 12th at 7:30 pm. The movie will begin at 8:00 pm.

Please see Karen Holleman for more information.

Read the MIKE Online! Go to the St. Michael's website, www.stmikessc.org, and click on Newsletter. Back issues are available there as well.

Treasurer's Corner

May 2016—Revenue and Expense Summary

	May Actual	May Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
Total Revenue	\$ 34,677	\$ 35,863	\$184,533	\$179,313
Total Expense	34,847	36,616	197,641	183,082
Net	\$(170)	\$(753)	\$(13,108)	\$(3,769)



We are in a quiet time at St. Michael's, the choir is on summer break and many members of our parish family are on vacation. June saw the first of our three planned Parish Life events, movie night on the lawn in the quad area of the church. The next movie night is July 15th and the last will be on August 12th. Fun time for the family, light snacks are provided, come and enjoy the movie.

Outreach had a very successful Get on The Bus activity, many mothers and their children were able to visit incarcerated fathers in San Luis Obispo with treats and activities for the children during the long ride. The next major Outreach project will be SoldierCare in August, watch for information on how we can assist in this worthy activity for our military members.

During the summer months, St. Michael's still maintains two church services and our sanctuary is air conditioned. Have a blessed and safe summer and, as time permits, we will see you at church.

A Refugee Crisis

By Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey

A refugee crisis is taking place right in our own backyard—men, women and often unaccompanied children fleeing gang violence reinforced by civic corruption in the Northern Triangle of Central America (Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala), currently considered one of the most dangerous areas in the world.

St. Michael's has joined an interfaith alliance helping to provide legal assistance to these desperate arrivals who are seeking asylum status as refugees to keep them from being deported as undocumented immigrants back to the violent homelands they have fled.

The particular focus of our support is a woman named Raquel, a single mother who barely made a living as the owner of a small store in El Salvador. Gangs began taking over the neighborhood—a pattern being repeated all over the Northern Triangle—demanding ever-increasing weekly payments. Raquel could not afford to keep paying and finally decided to close the store. This enraged the gang who then demanded a \$7,000 payment and threatened to kidnap and rape her daughter if she refused.

Terrified, Raquel started keeping her daughter home from school. She knew better than to go to the police who were often working with the gangs. Her only

choice was to take her daughter, without telling anyone and with just the few possessions they could carry, and make the dangerous journey to the United States. Somehow they managed to arrive safely but were immediately detained and threatened with deportation.

Now, the interfaith network of which we are part, UCARE, is helping pay for a “low-

bono” lawyer to advocate for asylum status for Raquel and her daughter which will enable them to stay in the country legally. Raquel can then get a work permit and a job and begin to make a new, safe life for the two of them, praying that the gangs will not take revenge for her departure on her mother, who remains in El Salvador.

July Birthdays

Day	Name
1	Kathryn Argall
3	Rhett Dupke
5	Melissa Basta
9	Karen Andrews Linda Andrews Caleb Fox
10	David Bassman Paris Carney Lillian Raesler
12	William Hendley
15	Milena Mooradian
23	Eileen Carhart
23	Porter Rodriguez
30	Bailey Robertson
31	Scarlett Vos

July Anniversaries

Day	Name
6	Jack & Barbara Beckner
26	Nick & Sharon Renton

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.

August Birthdays

Day	Name
1	Daniel Justin
3	June Van Dusen Alex Morales
4	DJ Fuller
5	Jennifer Best
9	Denise Schwartz
12	Rachel Albert-Hendley Rebecca Albert-Hendley
16	Elizabeth Bartolomea
17	Ethan Friedman
21	Owen Campbell
27	Monie Wright
30	Bella Holleman
31	Johan Agerbeek Betsy Hailey

News from Nicholas Renton

Nick Renton shares his adventures of returning to Saudi Arabia after his visit home

Dear friends,

I saw most of you during my return last month, and I appreciate the many kind words I received.

My vacation was not as restful as I had hoped: if you ever leave your permanent residence for several months, you end up with a lot of tasks to be done. Among tackling my neglected garden, finalizing my will, and getting my finances in order, I lacked a lot of leisure. My family, of course, also demanded my attention; with two teenaged daughters, my Burbank home is experiencing estrogen levels of stressful elevation. Yet I managed to visit my family in northern California and sing in the last choir Sunday at the church, and it was good to see my correspondents.

My departure provided some excitement: LAX was a zoo, and sclerotic traffic and massive lines imperiled my boarding my LA-Frankfurt flight. Most exasperating was the officious check-in clerk who did not see my Saudi visa (accessible online) on my new passport. As a result, she refused to let me board my flight. I vainly told her about my multiple reentry visa, but she seemed adamant. I then insisted that I get to Frankfurt, where I would deal with the flight to Dammam myself. At this she relented, thus only booking me and my baggage to Frankfurt.

In Frankfurt, I undertook a 30-minute trek to my Dammam gate and explained my plight to the ladies there (I flatter myself that my hard-won German gained their sympathy, though of course their English was excellent). As I had anticipated, the boarding agents found my visa and gave me the required boarding pass. The fly in the ointment was my arrival sans suitcase, which no doubt was forlornly rotting on the Frankfurt baggage carousel. I duly filed my report to Lufthansa and frequently checked the airline's website, which reported my baggage as found but awaiting confirmation.

However, when I checked my company-provided iPhone, I saw a number had

frequently called me. The blasted device had not rung—although I had set the volume to maximum. When I played the message, the rather incoherent voicemail seemed to want me to set up a pickup for my suitcase, which had arrived (unannounced online) on the next flight from Frankfurt. It had occurred to no one to update the website or send me an e-mail.

Now, setting up a pickup site in Saudi Arabia is not easy: the country lacks



addresses. What mail Saudis do pick up from their unreliable postal service arrives at a mail box. I realized that "one block north and one block east of Entrance #2 of Lulu's Hypermarket in Jubail" would probably elude the South Asian to whom the delivery task had been delegated (teaching English and German has given me a fine sense of comprehension probability!). I thus chose Lulu's as the site, and all would have gone swimmingly had my phone not failed me again. Only by opening the cursed thing did I see that the poor chap (and I) had been waiting in the torrid, 94° night within yards of each other. I tipped him 20 rials and received my suitcase.

I arrived on the third day of Ramadan: this holy month, as most of you know, requires that every Muslim neither eat nor drink during the day. The resultant fast aggravates the indolent tendencies of the country and shortens tempers. I saw an immediate result in my work at the naval academy. Here we endeavored to teach the laggard cadets—those cadets who had failed to achieve Book 12 by the end of May. These scholarly dregs sat in sullen apathy during instruction. The cadets know that they will not be expelled for poor academic performance, given Saudi society's tribal commitment to help

each other.

Fortunately, I found myself enlisted in a lot of inventory work for the week. I also wielded my broom and Formula 409. As a result, the textbook closet at the academy now sparkles in crisp, orderly stacks, indicating the industry of Dr. Renton to all. Meanwhile, after a test, we sloughed off 70% of the laggards, so that this past week we spent three days in the company of the dregs of the dregs—those cadets who had failed the June test. I found it best to minimize my efforts to engage these semi-sentient, protoplasmic blobs.

The rigors of Ramadan necessitated this; the warrant officers whose usual job is to growl menacingly at the cadets are fasting, too. They emanate more empathy with my students. We only taught five 45-minute periods, and only needed to show up at the lazy hour of 9:30. a.m. Mind you, during the summer solstice, the Fajr or predawn prayer blares out of every mosque at 3:15 in the morning; a royal decree ordained that no urban dwelling be more than 800 meters from a mosque. This both facilitates convenient praying and inhibits oversleeping. Thus my jet-lagged sleep pattern remains erratic.

During Ramadan, the quiet of the day energetically erupts in the evening: At 11pm, Saudis and expats swarm shops and restaurants—Lulu's was a veritable hive. I hear the hum and buzz of nightlife when I try to sleep. At sundown, traffic whizzes by on the street as folks race home for their Iftar meal, the repast at which Muslims break their Ramadan fast. I experienced this firsthand when our company treated us and our Saudi hosts to a generous Iftar banquet: I may post pictures thereof to FaceBook.

I also noted a cultural quirk here: Saudis traditionally break the fast by eating an odd number of dates; they then love to drink Vimto, a British "squash" drink (similar to Kool-Aid) that is a mix of "three fruit juices—grape, blackcurrant and raspberry—along with a mysterious blend

See RENTON, page 5

Christopher Montella's Ordination

June 4, 2016



Renton

from page 4

of 23 fruit essences, herbs, and spices." (I wonder whether my father or Godmother Lynne remember this one-time "vim tonic," a product born of Methodist temperance.) Once the date-and-Vimto preliminaries go by, gluttony ensues. Predictably, many Saudis gain weight despite the Ramadan fast. I myself refrain from eating at the academy, confining myself to a cup of coffee in our closed-door break room. Needless to say, all restaurants are closed during daylight hours.

We did not have to work this Thursday: the entire country is shutting down for the three-day holiday Eid al-Fitr, one of two official holidays of the country. Much as we adjust holidays to achieve the boon of three-day weekends, Saudis give themselves the whole week off. They exchange gifts

and gather in clans and families. The naval academy is closing down, too, so I have next week off. Savvier teachers dovetailed their vacation to lengthen their time off, but I sought to be home before my elder daughter Margaret left for her choir trip to Spain and Portugal.

Yet the idleness will be only relative: this month we are all moving to a new compound, supposedly more luxurious. It will be a nuisance to pack everything up, and I shall miss our current proximity to the convenience of Lulu's. Perhaps I shall do the paperwork needed to acquire a driver's license here, though I tremble to venture out on the Saudi streets. Mind you, the two-block walk in the desert summer to this Walmart equivalent is getting increasingly uncomfortable. It's been above 110° every day for two weeks (now it's 111°). I'm told it will hit 120° in August.

I rarely go out in the heat—I stay in air-conditioned comfort at the compound—

or frigidity at the academy. The poorly calibrated AC there means that I have to wear a warm jacket at work to avoid shivering. I think those of you in Southern California know that overenthusiastic air conditioning makes having a jacket ever at hand in any weather a wise idea. More concerning for me is the decreasing efficacy of my air conditioner. At 9 o'clock today, the AC is four degrees Celsius higher than the set temperature; I have heard reports of overstrained air conditioning breaking down here. Nonetheless, I have survived a San Fernando Valley summer without air conditioning, so should this happen, I shall endure it manfully and view it as one more culturally enriching experience.

That's it for my news. I shall write again from my new compound. I thank you all again for the many thanks and replies.

I remain yours,
Nick



The Calendar

July 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 is on break. 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
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content;"> <p>Locations:</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>						
3 Pentecost 7 11:30 am Sunday Sack Lunches (MC)	4 Independence Day	5	6	7	8	9 1:00 pm Concerned United Birthparents (FR)
10 Pentecost 8 9:00 am St. Michael's Outreach (FR)	11 6:15 pm Book Discussion Group (Jacobson Home)	12 6:30 pm Finance Committee (CO)	13	14	15 7:30 pm Movie Night on the Green	16
17 Pentecost 9	18	19 7:00 pm Vestry (L)	20	21	22 St. Mary Magdalene	23
24 Pentecost 10 11:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry (MC)	25 St. James the Apostle	26	27	28	29	30
31 Pentecost 11 12:00 noon Pastoral Care Committee (FR)						



The Calendar

August 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 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	5	6 ^{Transfiguration}
7 ^{Pentecost 12} 11:30 am Sunday Sack Lunches (MC)	8	9	10	11	12 7:30 pm Movie Night on the Green	13 1:00 pm Concerned United Birthparents (FR)
14 ^{Pentecost 13} 9:00 am St. Michael's Outreach (FR)	15 ^{St. Mary the Virgin}	16 7:00 pm Vestry (L)	17	18	19	20
21 ^{Pentecost 14} 10:30 am Sunday School Resumes	22	23	24 ^{St. Bartholomew the Apostle}	25	26	27
28 ^{Pentecost 15} 11:30 am Prayer Shawl Ministry (MC)	29	30	31			

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

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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.