

THE GUARDIAN

St. Michael the Archangel Episcopal Church El Segundo

Parish Office: 310-322-2589
Web site: www.stmichaels-elsegundo.org
Email: StMichaelsElSegundo@gmail.com

St. Michael's Children's Center
Ms. Lauren Cherrington
School Office: 310-322-7522

Worship Schedule
Sunday 8:00am Rite I Said Service
Sunday 10:00am Rite II
with Music

The Reverend Joshua Wong, Rector

Mission Statement for St. Michael's Church

*Growing in God's Love.
Working in God's Spirit.*

October 2026



Rector's Thoughts for October

Welcome to our October issue of The Guardian. As I write to you, today is the first day of fall. I hope you had a restful summer, able to catch up on a book or connecting with family and friends. For the church, summer is a long season of Pentecost, also referred to as Ordinary Times. It is the longest period of the liturgical year, starting from the Sunday after Pentecost or Trinity Sunday to the first Sunday of Advent, which this year begins on Sunday, November 29. Not unlike our summer "reset," Ordinary Times to a Christian is a time to focus on living out our faith in everyday life, work and community. Rather than focusing on major life events of Jesus, like his birth or resurrection, we reflect on his parables, miracles, and His daily ministry on earth.

August 31 prepares us to go forward with our St. Michael's School beginning a new year, and Otis' PBJ ministry continuing. The church gears up in October with St. Michael's Day celebration, Stewardship campaign, St. Francis day Blessing of the Animals, Bunco fundraising, and Lectio Divina/Centering Prayer each month. November 1 is All Saints Day.

Here at St. Michael's, we are blessed to have many opportunities to learn. We have our Sunday pulpit, monthly prayer and bible study, Forward Day by Day, weekly chances to serve, books to read, and our monthly Guardian newsletter. Our spiritual growth relies on our close relationship with God who speaks to us daily through the Holy Spirit.

May we grasp our brief time on earth with choices that fill us with the knowledge of Jesus Christ. May our hearts be open to the love of Christ.

Happy Fall everyone, Father Joshua+

Voices from the Vestry

We Punch Above Our Weight

When speaking with friends, I often refer to St. Michael's as "Small, but Mighty." For a congregation our size, we have a lot to offer, and we get a lot done. That's because of the people and their willingness to step up.

Take a look at the most recent quarterly ROTA and you see people filling multiple roles – 21 individuals filled 170 spots. Dan is on the ROTA **EVERY** week and Florine fills **SIX** different roles - she provides altar flowers, is part of the altar guild, and serves as acolyte, lector, intercessor and usher. The only thing she isn't doing is videography! Our small congregation pitches in to make our services run smoothly.

Another area where St. Michael's makes an outsized impact is outreach. We are a church with a big heart and a willingness to help all in need. By supporting CASE with food items, we provide safety to our neighbors on tight budgets; through PRISM we provide lifelines to the outside world to those in LA County jails; by donating to Blue Butterfly Village, we help low-income Veterans get by; offering PBJNF sandwiches at Otis, we spread joy to the students and staff; and coming together and playing bunco to benefit A Safe Place for Youth (SPY), we provide resources to teens at risk of homeless. I'm probably forgetting something, but you get the idea. We want to do it, so we make it happen. (If you are wondering what the NF is in a PBJNF sandwich, sign up to volunteer for the Otis outreach in November and find out!)

Lastly, let's talk about the Vestry. I have been honored to serve on the Vestry for the past couple of years so have seen first-hand all the work that this small group gets done. Each month seven of us meet for an hour to review a jam-packed agenda and decide what needs to get done and who is going to do it. New windows at the

rectory, signage, updated agreements, fire alarms, concrete work, and planning events were all covered in a recent one-hour meeting and action was taken.
Thanks to the commitment of the small, but mighty congregation, St. Michael's truly punches above its weight.
With love & peace,
Elizabeth

October 2026 Calendar

Sunday, October 4, Sunday services 8 and 10 am.
Pentecost 19 **BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS**

Wednesday, October 7, Children's Chapel at 10 am

Friday, October 9, BUNCO, 6:30 Yeaton Hall

Sunday, October 11, Sunday services 8 and 10 am.
Pentecost 20. **FAMILY WORSHIP**

Wednesday, October 14, Children's Chapel at 10 am

Sunday, October 18, Sunday services 8 and 10 am.
Pentecost 21 **LECTIO DIVINA AND CASE**

Wednesday, October 21, Children's Chapel at 10 am

Sunday, October 25, Sunday services 8 and 10 am. Pentecost 22
FAMILY WORSHIP AND STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY.

Women who changed the World Women have played important and life changing roles in our world and in the Bible.

In this issue, let's meet eleven Founding Mothers of the United States. Do you think there are "Founding Mothers?" The birth of our nation is often attributed to men we call "Founding Fathers." But it's time to recognize a few of the women who have played equally important roles in American history.

- Pocahontas (1595-1617) The daughter of a Powhatan chief, Pocahontas is well-known for saving Englishman John Smith from execution in the early 17th century, though the accuracy of this story is disputed. She later took the name Rebecca, which may be a reference to the biblical Rebecca, who was the "mother of two nations."
- Mercy Otis Warren (1728-1814) Warren was a propagandist who published the pro-revolution pamphlet *Observations of the New Constitution* under a pseudonym. Her great-great grandson later verified that

she was the author, long after her death. She also wrote one of the first histories of the Revolution, and the first by a woman.

- Martha Washington (1731-1802) Wife of George, Martha Washington was the first, First Lady of the United States. She stayed at her husband's winter encampments during the Revolutionary War, and he considered her essential to the war effort. As First Lady, she hosted a weekly reception at the White House, and her conduct as a socialite would set the standard for future First Ladies.
- Abigail Adams (1744-1818) Adams was the second First Lady of the United States and the closest advisor to her husband, President John Adams. She was self-educated and a strong proponent of women's rights, and she advocated for girls' education to be equal to boys'.
- Betsy Ross (1752-1836) You probably know Betsy Ross as the woman who created the American flag. It's said that she received a visit from George Washington with a request to sew a flag with six-pointed stars. She designed it, and some would say improved it, by creating instead five-pointed stars instead.
- Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784) Wheatley was the first African-American female poet to have her work published. She lived as a slave for the Wheatley family, who taught her how to read and write, and her work was praised by George Washington.
- Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton (1757-1854) Schuyler helped her husband Alexander Hamilton publish his political writings, including *The Federalist Papers*. Later, she co-founded the first private orphanage in New York City and remained involved in the organization's leadership for 42 years.
- Dolley Madison (1768-1849) The fourth First Lady of the United States, Madison is known for saving the portrait of George Washington and a copy of the Declaration of Independence before the British burned down the White House in 1812. Before the burning, she stood on the White House roof with a spyglass to watch the British approach.
- The female fighters in the Revolutionary War (War: 1775-1783) Did The female fighters in the Revolutionary War (War: 1775-1783) Did you know there were women who fought in the Revolutionary War? The list includes Deborah Sampson, who disguised herself as a man; Nancy Morgan Hurt, who is known for killing Tory soldiers; and Margaret Corbin, who worked a cannon in battle after her husband was injured.

References from this article were taken from WorldStrides educational travel programs offering students of all ages tours in Washington, D.C, and Williamsburg, Philadelphia, Boston, and other East Coast cities walk in the footsteps of these founding mothers (and their husband's too!)

Outreach



Bunco night for SPY

Join us on October 9th in Yeaton Hall for a fun-filled Bunco game night as we come together as a church to enjoy fellowship all while supporting a meaningful cause. We will be raising money for Safe Place for Youth (SPY), a Los Angeles organization dedicated to preventing and ending youth homelessness. SPY serves people age 12-25 who are experiencing or are at risk for homelessness. SPY provides services such as housing support, case management, education and employment assistance, and health and wellness services. Bunco night will give us an opportunity to be together as a church while making a difference in our community. We hope you will join us on October 9th and bring your friends and family! We request you consider a donation of \$20 for this important cause.

OTIS Ministry

Beginning November 3rd Otis Ministry is back! Our church serves at Otis College of Art and Design every Tuesday of every other month with two volunteers. This outreach includes preparing and distributing peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for students. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring enough donated supplies are available, including bread, peanut butter and jelly, Nutella, marshmallow fluff, and bananas. Please coordinate with the other scheduled volunteer ahead of time and plan to meet at Otis around 10:45 AM to set up. Most importantly, volunteers offer a warm, welcoming presence through friendly conversation, encouragement, and prayer when appropriate. A sign up sheet will be available in Yeaton Hall! If you have any questions, please ask any member of the vestry.

Awakening Reflection from Brother Dennis of Community of Divine Love

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?” Jesus / Matthew 16: 24.26

In Alcoholics Anonymous we learn that “We do not regret the past, not do we wish to shut the door on it.” For me, this squares with bearing the cross of my addiction, remembering that I will always be an alcoholic and drug addict. I have learned that as long as I tried to cling to the old ways and the old life I would never be able to experience the life I was created for. I had to completely surrender myself to the evolution from what Thomas Merton would call my “False self” to my “True Self.” The maturing of our spiritual life, and recovery is surely that, is a process of letting go – letting go of old ways of thinking and being. It is only in this letting go – this surrender to Love – that we become free to become who we truly are. —Brother Dennis

If you find yourself with addiction issues and you want help, please reach out to someone you trust, or contact Fr. Joshua. ***All conversations will remain safe and private.***

Children's Center News

Fall fun is on the way at the children's center! This month, we'll explore the season and get ready for one of our favorite holidays: Halloween. We're hoping to spot signs of fall soon—from cooler weather to colorful, changing leaves. Our older children will also practice important social-emotional skills, including using kind words, keeping their hands to themselves, and lending a helping hand. Our annual Halloween Parade will be on Friday, October 30th at 3:30.



Lauren Cherrington Director



Love comes in many forms, and yet,
Out first thought often isn't of a pet.
A love so steady, devout, and pure,
Is what a pet brings, that's for sure.
They aren't afraid you'll gain some weight,
They just want to clean those remnants off your plate.
All they ask is a hug and a meal,
And nothing else can make you feel so loved.
Love doesn't have to be flowers and romance,
It can be the "I'm so glad you're back home" happy dance.
A love pure and simple and so divine,'
Is what we receive from our loyal canine.
They think we are perfect, the absolute best,
With their devotion, we are truly blessed.
By Gerri Pisciotta

November newsletter articles and/or pictures
are due to musicalmelissa@gmail.com before Oct. 25



October Birthdays

Brady Gillam 12 Elizabeth Tobias 18
Edward Van Luinen 18 Amy Powell 22
Eric Amarosa 30

Since You Asked...

Questions from parishioners that you might also encounter.

Can we take many Bible stories to be literally credible?

Recently, a parishioner asked me a question. If Adam and Eve had three children and they were all boys, how did humanity occur? *NOTE: The sons were Cain, Abel, and Seth. The text also notes they had "other sons and daughters," with various religious traditions giving names to these unnamed siblings.*

This led me to question how much of the stories we read about in the Bible, such as The Creation of the World in seven days; The Garden of Eden; or Noah's Ark, can be taken to be literally true? For some believers, asking this question is heresy, and many evangelical churches do.

In our modern time, advancements in science and our understanding of the natural world have challenged literal interpretations of specific biblical passages. Society's moral and ethical values have evolved as well. Scientific literature and experts say that reconciling these discrepancies required a more symbolic approach to the Bible.

In researching this subject, I came across a few reflections from Episcopal priests. All tend to agree that these things matter only if these stories are to be taken at face value – which I want to emphasize – it should not.

So, how are we to interpret these stories or how we see the credibility of the Bible? It is important to remember that the Bible is inspired by God, and is also a historical document at the same time. During the writing of the Bible, other cultures and religions have similar stories in their sacred writings as well. Scholars agree that the biblical narratives of Creation and the Flood, for example, share profound structural and thematic parallels with much older Mesopotamian myths. These shared reoccurring elements are largely due to historical cultural exchange in the ancient Near East. Historians and biblical scholars generally view the Genesis flood narrative as being deeply dependent on these older Babylonian and Sumerian accounts, adapting them to reflect Hebrew monotheism and theology.

We cannot read the Bible literally because the Bible is a collection of ancient texts and genre written by various authors over centuries. To interpret it literally ignores the rich cultural nuances, colloquial expressions, and stylistic figure of speech used during those times. The Bible has figurative and symbolic passages that convey deeper spiritual or moral truths. These narratives often use parables, metaphors, and symbolism to communicate profound lessons. **Without this context, a literal interpretation can lead to a shallow understanding of the Bible's intended message and be easily misunderstood and misinterpreted.**

We see the Bible as a profound source of spiritual guidance that transcends rigid literalism. When we abandon a literal interpretation of the Bible, we can begin to understand our faith in light of its rich history, culture and symbolism. There are no other literatures in the world that is so rich in meaning, that can endure the test of time and space as the one that is inspired by God.

-Fr. Joshua+

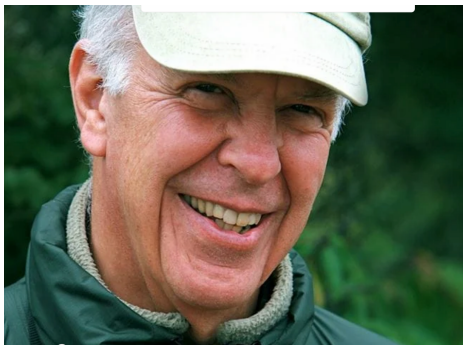
PBJ Ministry and the students at Otis

Thank you for your support for the student ministry at Otis College of Art and Design. It's hard to believe we have been in this ministry since March of 2025. The College Engagement and Community department welcomed us back with open arms in September. They heard from the students that the food and the friendship we provide are serving their needs.

During our time with them, St. Michael's volunteers have learned about their lives. Many students are the first in their family to attend college and require their parents to drive them to school. Some are transfer students from out of state or foreign students. Many are only able to attend college because of a state scholarship. We often feel like we are the ones providing for the needs of the students, but in fact, we are the ones that get rejuvenated whenever we are around them. They have been grateful for our generosity. Even the security guards tell us they are grateful we are doing God's work.

I am proud of our teams of volunteers that are present with the students. We are showing God's love to the world by sacrificing our time and our hospitality. Jesus has turned our donation of PBJ into the five loaves and two fishes. So, be encouraged St. Michael's family, for the donations you bring go towards great use. We continue to need your donations for the month of November when we will be back at Otis, and of course, we need more volunteers.

Father Joshua+



Theologian Spotlight

J. Palmer Parker

J. Palmer is an American author, educator, and activist who focuses on issues in education, community, leadership, spirituality and social change. He has published ten books and numerous essays and poems, and is founder and Senior Partner Emeritus of the Center for Courage and Renewal. He is a Quaker who has spent most of his life helping others to heal by reminding them of our great purpose and connectedness.

The following is my reflection from one of his books, *Let Your Life Speak, Listening for the Voice of Vocation*. This book was one of my required reading during my discernment for priesthood. Whether it be for that purpose or not, I highly recommend it if you are trying to listen to the Holy Spirit's guidance for your path in life and vocation. Throughout the book Parker J. Palmer invites us to listen to the inner teacher and follow its leading toward a sense of meaning and purpose.

I chose the following excerpt that conveys our journey in life and the search for meaning. It could be the searching of a new vocation, a new way of living, or anything else that is a major milestone in our life.

“Legend has it that years later a graduate student came to Rosa Parks and asked, “Why did you sit down at the front of the bus that day?” Rosa Parks did not say that she sat down to launch a movement, because her motives were more elemental than that. She said, “I sat down because I was tired.” But she did not mean that her feet were tired. She meant that her soul was tired, her heart was tired, her whole being was tired of playing by racist rules, or denying her soul’s claim to selfhood. Rosa Parks sat down because she had reached a point where it was essential to embrace her true vocation—not as someone who would reshape our society but as someone who would live out her full self in the world. She decided, “I will no longer act on the outside in a way that contradicts truth that I hold deeply on the inside. I will no longer act as if I were less than the whole person I know myself inwardly to be.”

Maybe you are tired of not being who you are or where you want to be in life? If you are, reach out to someone who you can trust, and I am here if ever you need someone to talk to.

—Father Joshua+

Knowing our religious neighbors.

What do Church of Christ, Scientist believe in?

Christian Science, is a monotheistic Christian religion associated with the Church of Christ, Scientist. It was founded in 1879 in New England by Mary Baker Eddy, who wrote the 1875 book *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which outlines the theology of Christian Science. Christian Science's religious tenets are in agreement with teachings of many other Christian denominations including God's forgiveness of sin, Jesus' atonement and man's salvation, and Jesus' resurrection. Christian Science does not support the doctrine of the Trinity, believing it not to be Scriptural. Eddy, described Christian Science as a return to "primitive Christianity and its lost element of healing.”

Based in this belief, Christian Scientists generally view disease and illness as a mental error, not a physical problem. Thus, to heal ailments, they usually rely on prayer rather than medical care. When members get sick, they call for a “Christian Science Practitioner”—a person certified by the Church, but with no medical credentials—to pray over them for healing in what believers call a “treatment.” They usually refuse to vaccinate their children, take medicine of any kind, or see a doctor, even for emergencies. However, they generally do see doctors for dental procedures, broken bones, and childbirth. Occasionally, Christian Scientists will seek other medical care, but they are often discouraged by the Church from doing so. The Church will not support giving Christian Science treatments to members who are also using modern medical care. The Church does not require that Christian Scientists avoid medical or surgical care, but maintains that Christian Science prayer is most effective when not combined with medicine. Hence, the reliance on prayer and avoidance of medical treatment has been blamed for the deaths of many followers and their children.

Christian Science Reading Rooms are part public library, bookstore, and quiet sanctuary. Established by church founder Mary Baker Eddy in 1899, they are mandated for every local church to serve as a welcoming community space where anyone can bring their questions and find spiritual answers to today's challenges; speak with a staff member to learn how prayer can help them; and explore spiritual texts for guidance without pressure to convert.

Episcopalians view Christian Science as a distinct and historically separate religious movement. While Episcopalians respect the sincerity and moral uprightness of Christian Scientists, we generally reject their core theological premise that illness and the physical world are illusions and strongly disagree with the avoidance of medical science. We value scientific discovery and consider it complementary to faith rather than opposed to it. Because the Episcopal Church actively supports medical science as a tool for healing, many members find the Christian Science rejection of doctors and modern medicine to be deeply problematic. Mainstream Anglicanism has historically found some of the fundamental theories of Christian Science—such as the belief that sin and sickness are entirely mental errors—to be unbiblical and undefendable. Despite these doctrinal gaps, Episcopalians do value the power of prayer and the connection between faith and physical health. Many parishes offer an "Unction" or "Laying on of Hands" for healing as a part of their liturgy.

Overall, Episcopalians see Christian Scientists as fellow neighbors and believers who share a reverence for Jesus, but practice a version of the faith that is far removed from mainstream Christian orthodoxy and scientific reason.

