



THE GUARDIAN

St. Michael the Archangel Episcopal Church El Segundo

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St. Michael's Children's Center

Ms. Lauren Cherrington
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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.

July/August 2026

St. Michael the Archangel Episcopal Church
361 Richmond Street
El Segundo, CA 90245

TO:

Rector's Thoughts for July/August

Happy July and August! Can you believe we are more than half way through this year?



In our church calendar, we are in the midst of our Pentecost Season, also known as Ordinary Times. When asked which season represents my Christian walk, I say it's Ordinary times. Why? Because it is what we have been prepared to live out in our faith. We have spent the past year preparing with Epiphany, Advent, Easter, Pentecost and now, we are living out the hope and the "sending out" into the world to live out that hope.

In the July and August issue of The Guardian, we reflect on the diversity of that life of hope. We learn about our identity as Episcopalian in the article about why worship has changed from Communion facing East, to facing the congregation. We learn about our identity in baptism, and about fellow Episcopalians that have made an impact in our faith, our church and in our society through the life of Thurgood Marshall. We also learn about God's confirming love to LGBTQia+, and lastly, about how our faith differs from those of our Mormon friends.

A lot of good stuff to unpack, so take your copy of The Guardian with you wherever you may be vacationing and ask God to speak to you in these ordinary times.

Enjoy,
Father Joshua+

What does Baptism mean?



Pope John XXIII was once asked, 'What was the most wonderful day of your life? "When you were made a priest, or a bishop, or Pope? He answered without a pause: The most wonderful day of my life was the day of my baptism, for on that day I belonged to Christ and his Church."

He continued to say, "Baptism is the great sacrament of belonging and of identity. So, more precious than my two passports, is my baptismal certificate, My passports tell me who I am. My baptismal certificate tells me WHOSE I am: 'I am Christ's own forever.' For when we know whom we belong to, we know most profoundly who we are. There is a wonderful moment in the baptism service when the sign of the cross is marked on our forehead and the priest proclaims your name, then you are sealed by the Holy Spirit in baptism, and marked as Christ's own forever. No longer do we have to struggle to establish an identity, to feel worthy of God's love, to feel accepted. We already belong to God, and God already loves us more than we can imagine. Our struggle now, is to become what we already are!"

Have you been baptized yet? What is holding you back? Come and speak to the priest.



Voices from the Vestry by Linda Winnard

As I write this, the summer solstice that marks the astronomical start of summer is about to descend upon us. For those of us in the northern hemisphere, the summer solstice is the day with the longest period of daylight. However, the in southern hemisphere, the exact opposite occurs; it represents the shortest day of light and longest night of the year. This dichotomy caused me to reflect on the significance of light and darkness recently from a Christian viewpoint.

The Bible is filled with references to light and darkness. In **Isaiah 9:2** we read, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." In **John 8:12**, Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Like a seed buried in the ground, we are nurtured in the darkness of the womb. We burst into light and grow in our homes before wandering out to discover yet more light. God calls us not only to step into the light, but also to become the light. And yet, becoming the light is still not enough.

God continues to call us into spiritual growth through giving us each other. We seek and create spiritual community through embracing hope, as well as sharing our dreams and struggles with each other. By doing so, we remind each other that the darkness will not last forever. We remind each other that light, by its nature, transforms darkness. As long as we carry the banner of light in our heart, and do not keep it to ourselves, we know we will emerge in the morning sun.

During this season of expanding and decreasing light and darkness, may God's Light renew your hope, fill your heart with joy, and surround you with love. May the pure Light within each of us guide you and those around you.



C.A.S.E. Ingathering July 19 & Aug. 16



Sugar, salt, cooking oil, olive oil, coffee, mayo, canned chicken, adult cereals, white rice, crackers, sardines, spam, tea, toilet paper, laundry detergent, dish soap, cleaning supplies, shampoo & deodorant, & \$25 gift cards to Ralphs

July Birthdays

Valerie Lapucia 3
Alex Brill 6
Fr. Joshua Wong 19
Kristen Van Heuven 20



August Birthdays

Gerri Pisciotta 13



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Edward J. van Luinen

Music has always been a gift in my life.

In early years, growing up in Midland, Michigan, I sang in my church children's choir. My aunt was the creative director and executive producer of the annual church Christmas pageant. For the 1975 event, I rehearsed with a college-aged church member who accompanied me on the guitar as I sang "O Holy Night". This was memorable and an encouragement to keep going with my newfound hobby.



A vacation to the Netherlands in middle school years saw us attending 2-hour church services and an introduction to massive Dutch pipe organs. Hearing a Bach fugue on this instrument was thrilling. After one of these lengthy services, my parents took us kids up to the balcony to see the organ up close where the organist demonstrated how to accomplish this four-limbed musical feat.

Adding to my church choir experience was high school choir, which was really fun. Senior year we sang part of the movie soundtrack "Fame". This same year our small band of choristers took the train to St. Michael's Cathedral in Toronto to sing at their service and for the boys in their well-known choir school. They were gracious with our version of "Ave Verum Corpus".

Senior year I invested in voice lessons to develop my technique and range further. With a fellow student of my voice teacher, we gave a senior recital. I sang cycles in English, Italian, French, and German.

In college I enjoyed singing in three choirs and got to solo the final year on our choir trip to Colorado. One year John Rutter visited our college and directed us in "Drop Slow Tears". His animated smile after our song was subtle, yet delightful high praise from such a notable composer and conductor.

From 1987-1989 I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guinea, West Africa, serving as a high school English teacher and rural health assistant. In the small town is an evangelical church serving the mostly Kissi inhabitants. I sang praise songs in the church choir in Kissi with no idea what I was singing. It does show the joy and universality of music to unite all peoples and cultures.

In 1990, the apogee of my music experience was a last minute audition for the Chicago Symphony Chorus. A singer as well, my boss at the time generously prepared me with some voice coaching, a thoughtful effort to fine-tune my audition piece. The actual audition involved singing back seven-note clusters by memory, identifying several keys of music, and an audition piece. For a funny story about this audition ask me at coffee hour.

To be led by musical giants Solti, Barenboim, and Slatkin was the quintessential music experience. Among other works, we sang Beethoven's Ninth Symphony at the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and a concert version of Othello with Pavarotti, Te Kanawa, and Nucci in Symphony Hall and Carnegie Hall. When surrounded by inimitable conductors, renowned artists, and talent-rich choristers, one cannot help but be inspired and rise to their greatness.

Going full circle to church choir, I'm grateful to sing at St. Michael's under the capable leadership of Adam and in the company of caring fellow choristers. Our love of music is an offering to God and to our special community.





July/August Theologian Spotlight— Thurgood Marshall

“He is remembered as “a wise and godly man who knew his place and role in history and obeyed God’s call to follow justice wherever it led.”

American lawyer, activist, and Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall is this month’s Theologian Spotlight. Marshall was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on July 2, 1908. As a lawyer, Marshall made the argument, in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case in 1954, that the doctrine of “separate but equal” was a contradiction in terms. “Equal,” Marshall insisted, “means getting the same thing, at the same time, and in the same place.” In 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson nominated Marshall to become the ninety-sixth Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, a position he held for 24 years.

Marshall was denied admission to the University of Maryland Law School due to its segregationist admissions policy. He enrolled and graduated magna cum laude from the Law School of Howard University in Washington. Marshall began the practice of law in Baltimore in 1933 and began representing the local chapter of the NAACP in 1934, eventually becoming the legal counsel for the national organization. Marshall compiled a long and impressive record of decisions on civil rights, not only for African Americans, but also for women, Native Americans, and the incarcerated; he was a strong advocate for individual freedoms and human rights. He adamantly believed that capital punishment was unconstitutional and should be abolished.

As a child, Marshall attended St. Katherine’s Church, one of Baltimore’s historic African American parishes. While living in New York, he was the senior warden of St. Phillip’s Church in Harlem and served as a deputy to General Convention in 1964. During his years in Washington, Marshall and his family were members of St. Augustine’s Episcopal Church, where he was affectionately known as “the Judge.” He is remembered as “a wise and godly man who knew his place and role in history and obeyed God’s call to follow justice wherever it led.” Thurgood Marshall died on January 24, 1993.

Lesser Feasts and Fasts, which is an official liturgical resource and acts as a supplement to the BCP honors Thurgood Marshall on May 17.

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Cont. From pg.5

The Collect for Thurgood Marshall:

Eternal and ever-gracious God, who didst bless thy servant Thurgood Marshall with grace and courage to discern and speak the truth: Grant that, following his example, we may know thee and recognize that we are all thy children, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Since You Asked...

Questions from parishioners that you might also encounter.

Why do Episcopal priests now celebrate Holy Eucharist facing the congregation, unlike before, when the altar was facing the wall?

Today, there are still some parishes that celebrate Holy Eucharist facing the wall and not the congregants. Prior to 1960, parishes celebrated Holy Eucharist facing East/Altar, called *ad Orientem*. This way of celebrating Holy Eucharist symbolized the congregation and priest together facing Christ. This can be described as "vertical worship." This form of worship originated in the earliest centuries of Christianity, with evidence dating back to at least the early 200s. Facing the wall symbolized looking for Christ's return rather than a performance for the congregation. The shift began to happen during the 20th-century Liturgical Movement which affected both Roman Catholics and Anglican/Episcopal churches. It promoted the idea that early home church Christians celebrated with the priest behind the altar. Thereby, this required that the altar table be brought forward from the wall and hence we now worship this way.

This led to Episcopal priests celebrating Holy Eucharist facing the parishioners—a posture known as *versus Populum*, symbolizing the meal and the community gathered around the table. This shift aimed to enhance community participation, emphasize the Eucharist as a communal meal, and update worship in line with a perceived "return to early church" practices. The understanding is that our fellowship with Christ and his community was horizontal, not only vertical.

The movement sought to move away from a passive congregation watching a priest perform a "private" ceremony at a distant altar. Facing the people allowed the congregation to see the altar and the actions of the priest more clearly, promoting a sense of shared participation. By standing behind a freestanding table facing the people, the priest appeared more like a host gathering with his community, rather than a solitary mediator turned away from them.

The shift broke down the barrier between the chancel (where the clergy stood) and the nave (where the people sat). It was seen as more democratic, engaging, and in line with modern sensibilities that favor direct, face-to-face communication.

While not strictly mandated by the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, the rubrics in the book (e.g., p. 361) encourage the celebrant to face the people during many portions of the service.

Take care,
Father Joshua+



Wednesday, July 1, Children's Chapel at 10 am

Friday, July 3, SMCC and office are closed

Saturday, July 4, Independence Day

Sunday, July 5, Sunday services 8 and 10 am. Pentecost 6

Wednesday, July 8, Children's Chapel at 10 am

Saturday, July 11, Installation of Bishop Gallardo, 10 am All Saints Pasadena, invitation only.

Sunday July 12, Sunday services 8 and 10 am, Pentecost 7 **FAMILY WORSHIP**

Wednesday, July 15, Children's Chapel at 10 am

Sunday July 19, Sunday services 8 and 10 am, Pentecost 8, Lectio Divina, CASE

July 22-August 7, Priest will be on vacation.

Wednesday, July 22, Children's Chapel is canceled.

Sunday, July 26, Sunday services 8 and 10 am. Family Worship, The Rev. Mel Soriano,
Pentecost 9

Wednesday, July 29, Children's Chapel is canceled



Sunday, August 2, Sunday services 8 and 10 am. The Rev. Jonathan Stoner, Pentecost 10

Wednesday, For the month of August, Children's Chapel will be on hiatus.

Sunday, August 9, Sunday services 8 and 10 am. **Family Worship Pentecost 11**

Sunday August 16, Sunday services 8 and 10 am, Pentecost 12, Lectio Divina, CASE

Tuesday, August 18, City Council invocation 6 pm

Sunday August 23, Sunday service 8 am and 10am, **Family Worship Pentecost 13**

Sunday August 23, Special guest speaker at 9am on Old Testament 101

Saturday, August 29, Commission on Ministry

Sunday August 30, Sunday services 8 and 10 am, Pentecost 14

Sunday August 30, Special guest speaker at 9am on New Testament 101

Monday, August 31, St. Michael's Children Center new academic year begins



HOMOSEXUALITY AND THE BIBLE

What does the Bible really say about LGBTQia+

This past June was Pride month. You may have experienced people who use certain verses in the Bible to justify their position against LGBTQia+. These handful of verses that are used must be compared with even more verses that are cited that seem to approve of slavery, or teach against women in societal leadership roles. **The key point here is this: When reading the Bible, it's never simply a matter of finding a few verses here or there to justify our point of view. The Bible must be read in consideration of the time and culture in which it was written, and reflect on the general themes Jesus is emphasizing. Reading the Bible literally is misleading and dangerous. To help us with this discernment, our guide is always found in the teaching and the example of the life of Jesus.**

When asked to summarize the whole of scripture, Jesus famously zeroed in on two verses, one from Deuteronomy, and one from Leviticus: "Love God with all your mind, heart, soul, and strength," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." For Jesus, those are the verses and the general themes that are most important. These verses are the lens through which we need to read the rest of scripture, and indeed how we live our lives in the world. The author of the First Letter of John picks up the same theme: "God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them" (1 John 4:16). And if we're not quite sure what "love" looks like in any given case, Jesus points to the rule many call "golden": "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

Jesus didn't say anything about homosexuality, in fact, very little directly about sexuality at all. What he did teach about, what he cared most about, were other things: loving God and neighbor, forgiveness, trust, humility, justice, mercy, the nearness of God's kingdom, and the importance of avoiding judgmental and arrogant forms of religiosity.

Christians may never agree on questions related to human sexuality, and that debate will continue. But it's a strong, respectful, and compelling Christian perspective to say that while we may disagree on some of these issues, we can and should agree that God calls us to create neighborhoods and larger communities in which each person is welcomed and respected. No one should be a second-class citizen and no one should be denied basic rights, services, or opportunities for leadership. This is what "loving your neighbor as yourself" looks like: treating one another kindly, both when we agree and when we disagree. Jesus never denied hospitality to anyone, and neither should Christians who seek to follow him. We should follow the example of what Jesus said and did, as we read those ancient texts with Jesus as our teacher and guide.

Knowing our religious neighbors.

Are Mormons Christians?



This month, we start a study on interfaith dialog. And to start it off, it is important for us to know what Mormons believe since we encounter them in our community. How do we differ in our beliefs? The following is an article by John Stonestreet and Timothy D. Padgett of MSN covering Religion.

Pew Research lists Latter-day Saints among “All Christians,” along with Protestants, Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Mormons not only call themselves Christian, it’s in their name, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”

However, though Mormonism uses similar concepts and terms as Christianity, what is meant is often very different from what Christianity teaches. While both Mormons and historic Christians believe in “Jesus Christ,” they are referring to different people.

Mormonism began in the early 19th century on what was then the American frontier. During that time, many religious groups were sparked in that part of New York State, many claimed to know what everyone else in Church history had missed. While many of these groups added or subtracted from biblical teaching, Joseph Smith claimed to have received a series of expansive visions that completely rewrote the script on Christianity. Smith crafted Mormon doctrines by adding three books, each with concepts unlike anything in the Bible. This led to a reimagined understanding of God from anything that Christians have preached since the Apostles. In fact, the Mormon view of God is even more extraordinary than the more notorious aspects of Mormon doctrine and practice, including special undergarments, polygamy, and that the Garden of Eden was in Missouri.

Mormon theology is simply incompatible with the Christian understanding of God. Christians see God as eternal existing from before all time and creation. Mormons claim God has not always been as He is. Joseph Smith once said in a sermon that “God himself was once as we are now.”

Furthermore, the Godhead is made of three distinct beings, or three gods. Their unity is “one of purpose,” but not, as the Christian doctrine of the Trinity clarifies, of one nature. Another key difference is *who* and *what* Jesus is. Christianity has always taught that Jesus is the eternal Son of God, a full member of the Trinity, “begotten not made.” He has always existed, but at the Incarnation He took on flesh and came to earth, remaining then and now as full God and fully man. In Mormonism, Jesus is God’s *natural* son, the offspring of the Father and a “Heavenly Mother.” All human beings are also God’s literal children in this way, according to Mormon doctrine, having lived in heaven before our conception and birth. Mormons believe that the afterlife reserved for those who had exalted lives will inherit created physical planets, and that the man will be the one that carries the woman and family to the planet. In other words, Mormons and Christians hold different and incompatible view about God, Jesus, human, sin, salvation, eternity and the Church.

As many people can attest, Mormons are often wonderful people. Despite some oddities, like not being able to drink coffee, they are often allies in an increasingly immoral society. However, Mormonism is not Christian, because Mormons and Christians do not worship the same God. Sharing certain convictions of morality does not imply sharing a theology, Christology, anthropology, ecclesiology or eschatology.

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The Episcopal Church generally views Mormonism as a distinct, separate religious tradition rather than a historic Christian denomination. While Episcopalians value friendly interfaith relations and respect the character of Latter-day Saints, they consider foundational Mormon beliefs, such as the nature of the Trinity, baptism, and additional scripture, to be incompatible with Nicene Christianity. The Episcopal Church reveres the Bible as the ultimate rule of faith, while *The Book of Mormon*, *The Doctrine and Covenants*, and *The Book of Abraham*, are regarded as an interesting piece of 19th-century American religious literature rather than divinely inspired scripture.

Father Joshua+

Discover more: <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/other/are-mormons-christians/ar-AA1OS6la?ocid=socialshare>
<https://truthandgrace.com/Episcopalonmormon.htm>

Children's Center News



This summer the Children's Center will be going on a virtual tour of California. They will learn about our great state through stories, pictures, family shared experiences, fun facts, activities, food, etc. Some of the places they will learn about are Yosemite, San Francisco, Mojave Desert, Joshua Tree, Mammoth, Big Sur, Catalina, Sacramento and Sequoia. We will have some wet and wild "beach" days and take a couple of trips to the Library and Rec park. We hope you enjoy your California Summer as well!

Lauren Cherrington

School Director

September newsletter articles are due Aug. 26th Send articles and pictures to melissaasings



A quiet moment with Judith before church.