

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 25)

Sunday, October 25, 2020

Live Streaming at 10:15 AM at

<https://www.facebook.com/stgregoryslongbeach/>

PRELUDE

David Feit-Pretzer

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Presider Blessed be God: ✠ Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

People **And blessed be his kingdom, now and forever. Amen.**

COLLECT FOR PURITY

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GLORIA

**Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Presider Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 34.1-12

Lector A Reading from Deuteronomy.

Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is opposite Jericho, and the LORD showed him the whole land: Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali, the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the Negeb, and the Plain—that is, the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees—as far as Zoar. The LORD said to him, “This is the land of which I swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants’; I have let you see it with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there.” Then Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, at the LORD’s command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day. Moses was one hundred twenty years old when he died; his sight was unimpaired and his vigor had not abated. The Israelites wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days; then the period of mourning for Moses was ended.

Joshua son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, because Moses had laid his hands on him; and the Israelites obeyed him, doing as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Never since has there arisen a prophet in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face. He was unequalled for all the signs and wonders that the LORD sent him to perform in the land of Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants and his entire land, and for all the mighty deeds and all the terrifying displays of power that Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

Lector The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 90.1-6, 13-17

- 1 Lord, you have been our refuge *
from one generation to another.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or the land and the earth were born, *
from age to age you are God.
- 3 You turn us back to the dust and say, *
"Go back, O child of earth."
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past *
and like a watch in the night.
- 5 You sweep us away like a dream; *
we fade away suddenly like the grass.
- 6 In the morning it is green and flourishes; *
in the evening it is dried up and withered.
- 13 Return, O LORD; how long will you tarry? *
be gracious to your servants.
- 14 Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning; *
so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.
- 15 Make us glad by the measure of the days that you afflicted us *
and the years in which we suffered adversity.
- 16 Show your servants your works *
and your splendor to their children.
- 17 May the graciousness of the LORD our God be upon us; *
prosper the work of our hands;
prosper our handiwork.

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 2.1-8

Lector A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians.

You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So

deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

Lector The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 22.34-46

Presider The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ According to Matthew.

People **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: "What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying,

'The Lord said to my Lord,
"Sit at my right hand,
until I put your enemies under your feet"'?

If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Presider The Gospel of the Lord.

People **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

SERMON

The Rev. Michael K. Fincher

NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,**

begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
 he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
 he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
 and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
 he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
 in accordance with the Scriptures;
 he ascended into heaven
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
 and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
 who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, ✠
 and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Nurturing God, your love is free, your compassion unconditional, and your mercy infinite. You shower upon us gifts abundant. Grant that we may know and trust these gifts, that we may discover the joy they bring, and inspire us to serve and to love out of that joy.

(a brief silence)

Open our lips, O God, that we may proclaim your benevolent truth and your call for justice in our communities, in our congregations, and in the world.

Gracious God, open our lips.

Open our minds, O God, that we might dream a Church reconciled, a Church that knows only your love so abundantly that it bursts with a passion for ministry, a desire to give completely, and a sense of stewardship that seeks only to give back.

Gracious God, open our minds.

Open our hearts, O God, to be transformed by the mighty outpouring of your compassion, so that our will to serve others with humility, integrity, and urgency is your desired will for us, your servants.

Gracious God, open our hearts.

Open our eyes, O God, to the hurts and needs of others that call us to ministry. Teach us to see where our own abilities and resources—and the world's deep hunger—meet.

Gracious God, open our eyes.

Open our hands, O God, to be your instruments of witness. Help us to work without hesitation, serve without recognition, to do justice, to love kindness, and to serve humbly with you, our God.

Gracious God, open our hands.

Open our memories, O God, as we remember those who have died. Help us honor the wisdom of those who devoted their lives to your service, and who generously gave of their time and treasure.

Gracious God, open our memories.

Presider Nurturing God, your love is free, your compassion unconditional, and your mercy infinite. You shower upon us gifts abundant. Grant that we may know and trust these gifts, that we may discover the joy they bring, and inspire us to serve and love out of that joy. In the name of the Risen Christ we pray. **Amen.**

CONFESSION OF SIN

Presider Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done,
and by what we have left undone.
We have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Presider Almighty God have mercy on you, ✠ forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

A spiritual communion is a personal devotional that anyone can pray at any time to express their desire to receive Holy Communion at that moment, but in which circumstances impede them from actually receiving Holy Communion.

In union, Blessed Jesus, with the faithful gathered at every altar of your Church where your Blessed Body and Blood are offered this day, and remembering particularly our own church community, we long to offer you praise and thanksgiving, for creation and all the blessings of this life, for the redemption won for us by your life, death, and resurrection, for the means of grace and the hope of glory.

And particularly for the blessings given us, that we now name, either silently or aloud.

(Pause)

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. I love you above all things, and long for you in my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you have already come, I embrace you and unite myself entirely to you; never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you have instituted for us a great sacrament in your promise of life and love, which we remember now as we hear your words again: "This is my body; this is my blood — given for you." Feed us in our hearts with faith and trust, draw us closer to you and to each other, and strengthen us for service to our neighbor. We come before you now, with hearts you have fed all our lives with the promise that you have given yourself for us. Keep us strong in that faith until we can meet at your table again. Amen.

BLESSING

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, ✠ the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

FAITH-FILLED GENEROSITY

Faith-Filled Generosity reflection for this Sunday can be found on page 9 of this bulletin

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SPECIAL BLESSINGS

Birthday and Anniversary Prayer: Watch over your child, O Lord, as *his* days increase; bless and guide *him* wherever he may be. Strengthen *him* when *he* stands; comfort *him* when discouraged or sorrowful; raise *him* up if *he* falls; and in *his* heart may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of *his* life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DISMISSAL

Presider Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

David Feit-Pretzer

Join us for our Virtual Coffee Hour in the Zoom Parish Hall following the worship service

The access link is available in the Weekly Eblast sent out Friday and in the "Upcoming Worship and Program Opportunities" Eblast sent out Saturday.

October 25, 2020

Freely giving our all to God

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind' And ... 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' " - MATTHEW 22:36-39

BY ROB TOWNES



There's a saying that the chicken who lays an egg makes a contribution, but the chicken who makes a sandwich offers a sacrifice. One could say that Jesus was alluding to the latter when he responded to the question as to which was the greatest commandment, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all of who you are.*" He was asking for more than a contribution; he was asking for the sacrifice of our all.

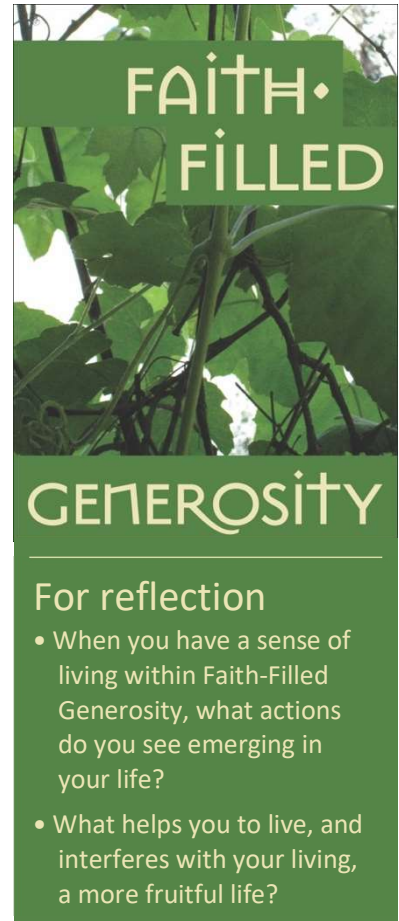
As the Latin root of the word suggests, a sacrifice — a *sacrum facere* — makes one holy. Giving generously of that of which you are a steward — your heart, soul, mind and all your possessions — is life giving. And it is countercultural. As the bumper sticker declares, "S/He who dies with the most toys wins." That's a powerfully seductive statement. Only with God's help can we avoid being allured into thinking that it is in acquiring possessions that our life gains meaning. May we grow in the wisdom that a rich life results in trusting that it is in God we live and move and have our being.

This reflection is written while visiting Green Bough House of Prayer in Scott, Georgia. Here the three residents, with the company of 77 associates, have dedicated their lives, their all, to God and have taken on a Rule of Life to embrace silence, prayer, simplicity and living in the present moment, and accept all as coming from God. Do all for God. Offer all to God. This to me is a beautiful example of Faith-Filled Generosity.

Very few members of the Church dedicate themselves to full-time contemplative living, but all of us are invited to learn to live Jesus' greatest commandment, trusting that in so doing, Faith-Filled Generosity will flourish in our lives.

As we move back into our church buildings, remembering only too well the COVID-19-caused absence of normalcy, may we re-enter with a renewed commitment to freely giving our all to God and faithfully loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Rob Townes received his Master of Divinity degree from Emory University's Candler School of Theology and has spent his professional career as a nonprofit and church fundraising consultant.



St. Gregory's Episcopal Church

6201 E. Willow St., Long Beach, CA 90815 / www.stgregorychurch.com / 562.420.1311

THIS WEEK AT ST. GREGORY'S

Sunday, October 25 (Today)

Virtual Coffee Hour following the Worship Service, **starting about 11:15 AM**, via Zoom.

Tuesday, October 27

Centering Prayer at **6:30 PM** via Zoom.

Thursday, October 29

Bible Study at **10:00 AM** in the Fireside Room courtyard and via Zoom.

Daily Offices (Monday through Friday)

Daily Morning Prayer: Monday through Friday at **9:00 AM** with Mother Sharon Sheffield on the St. Thomas Facebook page (<https://facebook.com/Saint-Thomas-of-Canterbury-Episcopal-Church-of-Long-Beach-CA-124554214274325/>).

Daily Evening Prayer: Monday through Friday at **5:00 PM** with Father Michael Fincher on the St. Gregory's Facebook page (<https://facebook.com/stgregoryslongbeach/>).

For the Daily Offices, you will need either a Book of Common Prayer or you can download the Morning and Evening Prayer liturgies and the Psalms for the week from the St. Gregory's website (www.stgregoryschurch.com).

Regarding Zoom Events: Some of our programs are being conducted using Zoom to allow for an interactive experience. You can access an event using your computer, smart phone, or even your landline. Access information is contained in the weekly emails sent to parishioners, or contact Fr. Michael at rector@stgregoryschurch.com or (909) 373-6478.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Service of Prayer for Our Nation: St. John's Cathedral will host a virtual Service of Prayer for Our Nation on **Thursday, October 29 at 7:00 PM**. The service will include music, prayers and readings calling us to be agents of hope and healing as we strive for peace and justice, as well as an electiontide message by Bishop John Harvey Taylor. Join the diocesan community as we lift our voices in common prayer and commit ourselves to living out God's values of love, justice and compassion in our beautiful and broken world. The service will be livestreamed on the diocese's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LADiocese>) and YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvaONDh1tfkDNXJxP1NlLfA>).

"Everyday" Saints: All Saints Day (November 1) is when we celebrate all the saints who went before us, like our patron St. Gregory. This year we are looking to celebrate our more "everyday" kind of saints. So, we invite you to think back on those people who have passed on

but truly influenced your life. They can be someone famous or someone “known to you alone.” Submit 1 or 2 names and a brief description of why you chose them to Sarah Spencer at spencer.victoria.sarah@gmail.com no later than October 27th so they can be added to our Saints List, which will be read aloud on All Saints Sunday.

Invitation to the Bishops’ Gala: Bishop John Harvey Taylor invites all in the diocese to log in to the Bishop’s Gala (previously known as the Bishop’s Dinner), a virtual fundraising event set for **Saturday, November 7 at 5:30 p.m.** and featuring the Most Rev. Michael Curry, presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church as keynoter. All are welcome, and while there is no charge to view and share in the event, generous online contributions are requested to benefit diocesan programs including Bloy House, the Episcopal Theological School at Los Angeles. The gala will be available for viewing via the diocesan YouTube channel and Facebook page. “Bishop Curry will be the guest of the whole Diocese of Los Angeles, inviting his listeners along the way of love just four days after the historic 2020 elections,” Taylor said, referencing Curry’s initiative for prayer and service. Donors of \$200 or more will receive an autographed copy of Curry’s new book, *Love Is the Way: Holding on to Hope in Troubling Times*.

Veterans Day Book Drive: We have been invited to join St. Thomas of Canterbury in their First Annual Veterans Day Book Drive, in partnership with The Heinlein Society’s “Heinlein For Heroes” program. Heinlein For Heroes (H4H) places science fiction and fantasy books, especially the books of Robert Heinlein, in the hands of active military personnel and veterans in veterans’ hospitals. Service people on deployment have very limited baggage and can’t take many books along, and VA hospitals always need fresh books for their libraries. We are looking for donations of new or gently used sci-fi and fantasy books that you would like to contribute to the cause. Please drop off your books at the Parish Office by **Thursday, November 5th**. You can drop off books on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 10:00 and 12:00. Or call the parish office to see about arranging a time that is convenient for you. Donated books will be delivered to St. Thomas, where they will be blessed at the Veterans Day service on Sunday, November 8th.

St. Gregory’s Sharing Library Re-opens! Are you yearning for some new reading material? Have some books you’d like to donate so others can enjoy them? Great news - the St. Gregory’s Sharing Library has re-opened for parishioners! The library is opened between 4 and 6pm on Thursdays to borrow, return or donate books. During November, the library is also opened on the first and third Thursdays (11/5 and 11/19) from 9 to 10am and from 11 to 12 noon. For up-to-date changes to posted library hours, see <https://tinyurl.com/SGSLHours>. COVID-19 safety protocols will be in place to ensure everyone’s safety, so be sure to wear a mask! Questions, please contact Kim LeBouton (kim.lebouton@kjlcomputing.com, 562-305-1131).

Feed My Lambs & Food Bank Needs: Our feeding programs need your help!

- **Feed My Lambs:** We need soup!! Bear Creek Cheddar Broccoli, please! You can order it from Amazon or other retailers, and have it sent to the church. We could also use: towels, wash cloths, men’s pants and shorts (sizes 32-38), men’s shoes (sizes 10-14), backpacks, and blankets. If you have items to donate, please contact Tamera Benedict (calbenedicts@gmail.com, 562.301.6800).
- **Food Bank:** We particularly need cereal, canned tuna, and ramen.

Anyone under 65 and healthy is welcome to assist on Food Bank distribution day. Please contact Bill Eldon (billeldon@gmail.com, 562.234.9920). Similarly, those under 65 and healthy are welcome to assist with Feed my Lambs. Please contact Tamera Benedict (contact info above). Your continued support of these ministries, through product and monetary contributions, is greatly appreciated.

Gratitude for Your Support of the Parish: We continue to be humbled and so incredibly grateful for your generosity in supporting our parish and its ministries! While you may not be able to drop your donation in a real offering plate, there are still ways you can make sure your donation gets to the parish:

- You can mail your check to the parish office.
- Make donations through our online payment account, accessible through the parish website at <http://stgregoryschurch.com/4721-2/>.
- Scan the QR code found in the Sunday bulletin.

And again, THANK YOU for your continued support!

Parish Directory: Our online parish directory is at <https://www.instantchurchdirectory.com/>. This is a secure site and can be accessed using the email address you had published in the parish directory. You can also download the “Instant Church Directory” on your smart phone. Versions are available for Android, iPhone, iPad, and Kindle.

One Body & One Spirit Emergency Appeal: The Diocese has established an emergency fund to assist congregations, diocesan institutions, and their employees, who have been affected by the COVID-19 shutdowns. We are encouraged to prayerfully consider making a donation to help others in need, if we have the capacity to do so. More information is available at https://diocesela.org/uncategorized/covid-19_emergency-appeal/.

Assistance for Our Parishioners: During these difficult times, it may be a challenge for some of our more vulnerable parishioners to get out to get groceries or other necessities. If you need such assistance, please let the Parish Office know and we will figure out how we can help you out. And if you are willing to help out by shopping or running errands for your fellow parishioners, please let the Parish Office know.

In Case of Emergency . . . Notify Your Priest! In the event of a pastoral emergency (i.e., hospital stay, illness, being homebound), please notify Fr. Michael or the Parish Office. You can call the Parish Office at 562-420-1311. If no one answers, dial 302 for Fr. Michael’s extension and leave a message on his voicemail. Or you can call Fr. Michael directly on his cell phone at 909-373-6478. And PLEASE, no excuses about not wanting to bother me. That’s why I’m here – for YOU!

PRAYER LIST

Lydia Gibbs, Michael Carr, Ralph Wong, Suzan Laverty, Martin Nemitz, Ferdinand Gonzalez,
George Gillespie, Roberta Raymer, Patrick McDonough, Darlene Feit-Pretzer,
Lisa Fincher Bailey, Molly Dawes, Charles Malonson, Rosemary Eldon McBride, Mike Laverty,
Lou Duacsek, Michael S., Kathy Stein, Kim White, Jack Reidy, Alexander Comiskey, Joseph Johns,
Patty Bozoff, Ross Davis, Debbie Fields, Charlene Rice, Ella Mae Marble, Ruth McClune, Karen
Fawson, Robert Huff, Bob Ragland, Reid W., Jared Baker, Gina Baker, Bob Gergen, Larry Curry,
Grace Stinson, Nancy Menzel, Cindy Beck, Barbara Smuck, Fr. Doug Judson, Michael Cartisano,
Paula Rothaug, Nika Sherbakova, Betty Peacock, Myron, Sholla, and Mel Marsh

*Note: Unless we are aware of on-going concerns, names only stay on the Parish Prayer List
for a month. If names need to be re-added, please notify the Parish Office.*

Texts of Sunday sermons are available on our parish website, at
<http://stgregoryschurch.com/sermons-archive/>

To make secure, online donations to St. Gregory's, simply scan:





ST. GREGORY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

6201 E. WILLOW STREET, LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90815
562-420-1311 WWW.STGREGORYSCHURCH.COM

WELCOME TO ST. GREGORY'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH!

St. Gregory's is a warm and caring community of families and singles, young and old, committed to sharing the good news that Jesus is the Lord of all life. We are an Episcopal Church, having members from all backgrounds and religious traditions, many of us had no church involvement before coming here. We want to offer to you the same welcome and friendship that were extended to us when we came to St. Gregory's.

ST. GREGORY'S MISSION STATEMENT

God has called us into Christian community and gifted us for ministry:

- To worship and glorify God
- To transform faith into action
- To share the love of Jesus Christ

The Right Reverend John Harvey Taylor
Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles

The Reverend Michael K. Fincher, Rector
909-373-6478
rector@stgregoryschurch.com

David J. Feit-Pretzer, Director of Music
714-899-1902

Kevin Wood, Parish Administrator
562-420-1311
info@stgregoryschurch.com