



# The Ascendant

A Newsletter by and for Members and Friends of Church of the Ascension

February 2016

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## Dia de la Candelaria

On February 7th, the congregation that attends the 11:00 a.m. Spanish service will celebrate the "Dia de la Candelaria". We will have the "Baby Jesus blessing." After the Eucharist, we will celebrate with typical Latin America food. Everyone is invited to join us in the Undercroft Commons.

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## Ash Wednesday Services



Ash Wednesday is February 10. We will celebrate the Holy Eucharist and offer the Imposition of Ashes at 12:00 noon and 7:30 p.m. in the Main Church. The Labyrinth will be available for meditation in the Chapel from 10:00 a.m.–7:00 p.m.

"Ashes to Go" will be offered again this year for evening commuters at the Gaithersburg MARC Train Station.

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## Epiphany Pageant Thank You

Many thanks to all the children and parents who participated and assisted in this year's Epiphany Pageant and after event party. Special thanks to Rose, Jerrold, and Randy.

Gordon Donnelly,  
*Pageant Director*

## Groups at Ascension

Some of you will remember my recent sermon about strengthening community at Ascension through the creation of small groups of various sorts. In particular, I want to reprise the "pilot" small group format of Lent 2014, when we had eight groups up and running.

Would you consider hosting or joining a group like this (6-12 people) that includes a dash of prayer and discussion about a passage in the Bible? You can add this to an existing group you're part of now at Ascension (Prayers and Squares did this, for example), or you can start one with no Ascension members in it other than yourself. Some groups meeting at Ascension already function this way, such as the "Listening Hearts Community" on Monday evenings, and our Education for Ministry Group on Tuesday evenings.

Or you can join one that somebody else started. It can meet in somebody's home, here at the church, or even at places like Panera or Growler's Pub!

Concerning leader friendly formats, here is the link to the "African Bible Study" (which I recommend as "Plan A"): <http://bit.ly/NeenOS>. And here is a good "Plan B" (the "Discipleship Group" curriculum): <http://bit.ly/1jSMb23>. Or you may wish to group around a book. Ask me for suggestions or share with me something that you are very interested in doing with others.

Groups like this are not unknown in Episcopal churches but are more commonly found in nondenominational congregations. They are great for getting new people assimilated into a congregation and keeping them in the congregation. The way it usually works is that people who are new to a church get an invitation to a group after they've attended worship a time or two. The vestry will be discussing Ascension's implementation of small group ministry at its February 7 meeting (the snowzilla date!).

Groups may meet as many times as they want, of course, but I suggest getting together 1-3 times a month. How often you meet and where is something you work out with people you've signed on with.

I am going to start this process by sending out a SignUp Genius to help me in recruiting facilitators. Or e-mail me if you are interested in facilitating a group. I will eventually publish a directory of groups for people to see what's available, and a date to get the leaders squared away before we commence.

The families with young children who attend the 10:15 service grouped in 2014 and are probably going to do it again. There is interest in a group for singles at Ascension. Once I have got a number of commitments from prospective facilitators, I will circulate a list of available groups with a description of what they're about.

Group facilitators will be in a group with me as the facilitator.

Peace!  
(The Rev.) Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Rector

# LIFE LONG LEARNING

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## Education for Ministry (EfM)



EfM is a theological program, organized and coordinated by the University of the South School of Theology, Sewanee, TN (<http://efm.sewanee.edu/>) -there are no term papers or final exams! The program is preparation for, or enhancement of the ministry to which we all are called. An EfM group consists of six to twelve participants and trained mentor(s) who meet weekly, in a seminar format, over the course of a nine-month academic year. Through study, prayer, and reflection, the seminars furnish an opportunity to deepen understanding of the reading materials. More important is the development of skills in theological reflection. The goal is to learn to think theologically. By examining one's own beliefs and their relationship to our culture and the tradition of our Christian faith, participants learn what it means to be effective ministers in the world. With realization that everything we do has potential for manifesting the love of Christ, we discover that our ministry is at hand wherever we turn.

Church of the Ascension offers this enlightening program on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. in the Library. But it's more than a class, it builds a community through shared meals and prayer.

For questions or additional information, please contact David Mitchell at 240.454.1904, [newlywed98@comcast.net](mailto:newlywed98@comcast.net); or Bob Owolabi at 301.518.9835, [bob.owolabi@verizon.net](mailto:bob.owolabi@verizon.net).

## Wednesday Morning Book Group

10 to 20 Ascension members (and friends) gather weekly at 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the Library to read and discuss challenging ideas that inform how we are to be followers of Jesus the Christ - or just beings with a spiritual dimension - in the 21st century.

We are currently exploring *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life*, by Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest. See the announcement bulletin weekly for chapter assignments.

## New Book for Wednesday Mornings: Diana Butler Bass's *Grounded*

You're invited to join a discussion group using *Grounded*, Diana Butler Bass's latest book on the transformation of religion in America. The first installment of this new book study will be Wednesday morning at 10 a.m. in the Library on March 2. Watch the Sunday announcement for specifics about which chapters to read in advance.

Here is what's on Amazon about *Grounded: Finding God in the World - A Spiritual Revolution*:

The headlines are clear: religion is on the decline in America as many people leave behind traditional religious practices. Diana Butler Bass, leading commentator on religion, politics, and culture, follows up her acclaimed book *Christianity After Religion* by arguing that what appears to be a decline actually signals a major transformation in how people understand and experience God. The distant God of conventional religion has given way to a more intimate sense of the sacred that is with us in the world. This shift, from a vertical understanding of God to a God found on the horizons of nature and human community, is at the heart of a spiritual revolution that surrounds us - and that is challenging not only religious institutions but political and social ones as well.

*Grounded* explores this cultural turn as Bass unpacks how people are finding new spiritual ground by discovering and embracing God everywhere in the world around us—in the soil, the water, the sky, in our homes and neighborhoods, and in the global commons. Faith is no longer a matter of mountaintop experience or institutional practice; instead, people are connecting with God through the environment in which we live. *Grounded* guides readers through our contemporary spiritual habitat as it points out and pays attention to the ways in which people experience a God who animates creation and community.

Bass brings her understanding of the latest research and studies and her deep knowledge of history and theology to *Grounded*. She cites news, trends, data, and pop culture, weaves in spiritual texts and ancient traditions, and pulls it all together through stories of her own and others' spiritual journeys. *Grounded* observes and reports a radical change in the way many people understand God and how they practice faith. In doing so, Bass invites readers to join this emerging spiritual revolution, find a revitalized expression of faith, and change the world.

# LIFE LONG LEARNING

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## Lenten Series: God's Children Talk about Race

"The end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community."- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., December 3, 1956.

In 1956, Martin Luther King, Jr., called for a "Beloved Community" in which black and white could meet in unity and goodwill. Sixty years later, many people feel simply angry, tired or even left out of the conversation on race. They hear terms like "White Fragility" - "Systemic Oppression" - "White Privilege" - "Color Blindness" and feel accused or simply confused.

If you are upset by racism but feel as if you need a dictionary to understand how people talk about race in America, join our Lenten series this February and March. As a community of lovers of Jesus, we will use three interactive workshops to develop a shared vocabulary, to examine anxieties and hopes about race and to build a foundation for making a difference in the wider world. We will anchor our discussions in personal experience and current events and in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call for a Beloved Community. Please join the conversation to share your experiences of anger, love, invisibility, and compassion. People of all ages, experiences, and ethnic backgrounds are welcome.

The workshops will meet February 21 ("Personal Racism and the Invisibility of Whiteness"), March 6 ("Systemic Racism"), and March 20 ("Can You Love a Stranger ... or a Racist") at 12:30 p.m. in the Undercroft Commons. Hearty snacks will be served.

<http://malteblom.deviantart.com/art/Martin-Luther-King-Poster-407885909>

## Coming Attractions for Lenten Formation

Kirk Fitch and Alice Benson will host a viewing and discussion of the acclaimed *Armor of Light*, a documentary following an Evangelical minister and the mother of a teen aged shooting victim who ask, is it possible to be both pro-gun and pro-life? See more about the film at <http://www.armoroflightfilm.com/>. Kirk and Alice will announce the date as soon as they procure the video.

Imam Haytham Younis, one of the co-conveners of the Greater Gaithersburg Alliance along with Randy and Rabbi Charles Arian, will visit Ascension on a Sunday in Lent to talk about the essentials of Islam. Haytham is an American born Muslim of Syrian descent who studied Islam at the Islamic University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia (where he lived for twelve years). He is a

gifted teacher and an architect by trade, having studied the latter at the University of Michigan. He lives in Montgomery Village with his wife and three sons.

## Yoga Classes at Ascension

Lucia Tolson teaches an entry level class at 10:00 a.m. every Thursday morning in the Chapel. Her classes run for about an hour. There is a suggested donation of \$1-\$10.

Randy's Wednesday evening classes are on hiatus for the time being, starting in February, while he participates in a parenting seminar.

## The Listening Heart Community

The Listening Heart Community is Ascension's "monastery of the heart", an intentional group for seekers in all stages of their spiritual journey to explore Benedictine and other contemplative spirituality in community. We encounter scripture and other texts through lectio divina and use contemplative practices to deepen our experience of the sacred in each moment. Meeting dates in February are Monday February 1 and 15 from 7-8:30 p.m. in the library. Contact Lori Perine at [lperine@gmail.com](mailto:lperine@gmail.com) if you would like to join us.

## Present Moment, Wonderful Moment: Still Water Mindfulness Practice Group

New and experienced practitioners are welcome on Tuesday evenings from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. in the Chapel. An introduction to mindfulness practice is offered on the last Tuesday of each month, at 6:45 p.m., followed by a guided meditation. Additional resources and program announcements are available via our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/stillwatermpc>.

For more information, contact Lori Perine at [swgaithersburg@gmail.com](mailto:swgaithersburg@gmail.com).

## ESOL Class

Free ESOL classes, English for Speakers of Other Languages, are offered at Ascension on Sunday mornings, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in Room 1. Childcare is provided. Contact Luis Pedron if you have questions at 301.922.5610.

## Spanish Bible Study

Javier offers a Spanish Bible Study every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at rotating locations. Contact Javier at [ocampo@ascensionmd.org](mailto:ocampo@ascensionmd.org) for more information.

# LIFE AT ASCENSION

## Ascension's Adventurers to Tour the "Holy Land"



All parishioners and friends are invited to participate in a tour of the Franciscan Monastery in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, March 5. The monastery offers an opportunity to see replicas of famous Holy Land shrines. We will meet in the Ascension House parking lot at 9:45 a.m. to carpool. Alternatively, participants can meet us at the monastery at 10:50 a.m. The tour is free, but donations are greatly appreciated.

Participants are also invited to join us for lunch at a yet-to-be-selected restaurant. The carpools will be organized to allow some people to stay for lunch, while other can return directly to Ascension. For more information see <http://www.myfranciscan.org/>. Also, feel free to contact Richard Snay at [rssnay@aol.com](mailto:rssnay@aol.com), or at 301.977.5259.

## Winter Weather Policy

At Ascension, we always TRY to have church even when the weather is bad. We realize that travelling may be very difficult for some, so please make the best decision for you and your family about Sunday church attendance. Even if we have Sunday services during inclement weather, we may cancel all other activities, such as Christian Formation for Children, Youth and Adults. Volunteer leaders, likewise, should use personal judgment about the safety of their travel that day. Cancellations will be announced by way of e-mail and on the outgoing message line at 301.948.0122.



As a rule, we will follow Montgomery County Public Schools for closing and cancellation decisions. If there is a delayed opening our morning activities are cancelled. If schools are closed, morning and afternoon activities are cancelled. In this event, evening activities still may be scheduled, so check in with the committee chair or call the outgoing message line at the church to check the status of your meeting or activity.

## March Ascendant

Please email Pia Leaman by Thursday, February 18, if you have anything for the March Ascendant at [leamanp@ascensionmd.org](mailto:leamanp@ascensionmd.org). Thank you!

## Movie Night, Friday, February 5

Everyone is welcome to meet up in the Undercroft Commons on Friday, February 5 at 6:00 p.m. to watch *Rise of the Guardians* (rated PG). This is "a gorgeously animated film about Boogeyman Pitch Black's attempts to spread darkness and fear throughout the world and the guardians' attempts to foil him." Check out the full description on Amazon: <http://amzn.to/1Qpg490>.

We'll start off with pizza and whatever else people want to bring. We do ask for a donation of \$5 per person with a \$15 per family maximum toward the cost of the pizza. We'll start the movie at 6:30 and we'll most likely be out and off to bed by 8:30 p.m.

Please bring your favorite beverage, and some to share. Snack foods will not be denied admission. You need not be a child, or have one, to attend! Dolls, favorite toys, sleeping bags and pillows are also welcome!

Please RSVP by Midnight Thursday, February 4. We need 10 confirmations to make Movie Night happen...



## Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



This fun annual event will be held on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. in the Undercroft Commons.

Come join us to celebrate Mardi Gras, Carnival, Fat Tuesday...or a good excuse to have pancakes and sausage! Vegetarian sausage and sugar-free syrup are included on the traditional menu...there will be something for everyone. This fun event needs lots of helpers AND lots of attendees, 'the more, the merrier!'

Cost (s); \$5.00 per adult; \$3.00 per children 4 to 10 years; and children under 4 are free. N.B. We DO take debit and credit cards.

If you have an instrument you would like to play, contact Randy at [ral@ascensionmd.org](mailto:ral@ascensionmd.org).

Sign up here: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0a4caba82da75-shrove>

### In Our Thoughts and Prayers



#### We Give Thanks for the Birth of:

*Charlotte Sandstrom, daughter of Kate and Brian Sandstrom, who was born on January 19.*

#### We Give Thanks for the Lives of:

*Monique Marbury, who died on January 15.*

*Susan MacDonald, who died on January 18.*

*Doris Ngaruiya, who died on January 24.*

*Clarence Simpson, who died on January 30.*

*Ruth Bell Wolfrom, who died on January 31.*

## Men's Shelter Lunch Program

The Men's Shelter Lunch program provides bagged lunches for residents of a local homeless shelter, assembled in the Undercroft Commons once a month. Supplies are donated by Ascension members. Depending on the season, we provide forty to eighty lunches a month. Sign-up for contributions are through an online system and assembly occurs by those present after the 9:00 o'clock service on the third Sunday of the month.

We will meet next on Sunday, February 21. Contact Edith at [esekasi@gmail.com](mailto:esekasi@gmail.com) if you would like to help, or follow this link <http://bit.ly/1DVayRb>.

## Mobile Med

This is one of Ascension's most important ministries. We host the MobileMed van every Tuesday from 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Volunteers are assigned a 2 ½ hour shift each month. Duties include collecting basic patient information, answering questions and ensuring a safe, comfortable waiting area. Our contact for Mobile Med is Jean Cohn at [spangle1@comcast.net](mailto:spangle1@comcast.net) or 240.372.3652.

## This Year's Rice Bowl Offering

The Lenten Rice Bowl Offering has been a tradition at Ascension since the 1980s. The offering comes from parishioners' cash or check donations left in a wooden bowl as they come forward to receive Communion. This year's offering will be split between the two organizations described below.

*Episcopal Relief & Development and the Humanitarian Arm of the Episcopal Church of Liberia* Episcopal Relief & Development and the Humanitarian Arm of the Episcopal Church of Liberia (ECL-RD) have launched a program to mobilize faith networks to end sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The aim of the program is to prevent violence against women and girls and increase survivors' access to services. SGBV is pervasive throughout Liberia, and the prevalence can be attributed in part to the moral and institutional breakdown during the country's devastating 14-year civil war.

#### *Refugees Welcome Here*

We will also sponsor a #RefugeesWelcomeHere meal at Ascension, where Ascension members provide and share a meal with refugee clients of the International Cultural Center Crossroads program. Nouf Bazaz supports and is studying the idea.

# VESTRY DIGEST

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*Vestry Digest, December, 2015*

Present: Randy Lord-Wilkinson, Enid Cole, Betsy Hasegawa, Rose Buck, Gordon Donnelly, Janet King, Avin Lalmansingh, Denise Lionetti, Najma Stubblefield, Paul Whitmore. Absent: Lauren Kingsland, Gary McLaughlin. Guest: Howard Holland.

## Old Business:

**Annual Giving Campaign.** Avin reported we are behind last year in number of pledges, and the dollar amount pledged. The campaign will continue with renewed efforts to encouraging pledging.

**Music Minister Discernment Committee.** With great enthusiasm, Gordon and Randy reported on the hire of Jerrold Tidwell for the Minister of Music position at Ascension. His first Sunday service will be January 10th. Betsy will take the lead on a small celebration/presentation to note the last Sunday for the interim ministers, Carl Schwartz and Karina McCarty, January 3.

## New Business:

**Capital Campaign Cottage Meetings.** Betsy reported preliminary results of the Cottage Meetings, which provided parishioners the opportunity to voice their opinions on the proposed renovation of the Ascension building. At this time, support for improving accessibility to all areas was widely supported; no other clear consensus emerged. Betsy is compiling the scribe notes from the groups and with input from Jan Hauber and Richard McFarland will prepare the results for Vestry review. Leslie Pendleton, a consultant from the Episcopal Foundation will assist us in discerning the next steps.

Randy has been in contact with the architect and contractor about itemizing renovation projects. A sample short pew was on display in Room 1, which was found to slide when sat upon; Randy noted that the sanctuary will be fully carpeted which would eliminate the sliding.

**Nursery Coordinator.** A new, binding job description for the Nursery Coordinator position was requested of the personnel committee and Rose, the vestry liaison. The current coordinator will review and if acceptable to her, will be encouraged to accept the new position. The description will provide for a paid Sunday off at regular intervals which at Najma's suggestion will be covered by parish volunteers.

**Janitor Contract.** Three janitorial service contractors have performed walk-throughs at Ascension and will submit cost bids. The new contract will start Jan 1, 2016 at a maximum cost equal to what we are paying now.

**City of Gaithersburg Inspection of Ascension House.** Ascension House has been approved by the city as a residence. An official letter is pending due to the absence of the manager; it will be mailed upon her return.

**Discernment for a New Vestry Class.** Potential new members were identified and will be asked to consider standing for Vestry in 2016.

**2016 Budget.** Howard reported that the 2016 budget is facing a deficit. While he reported confidence that we can afford to use some funds from the endowment this year, it is not something we should continue to do. With the support of the vestry he will present the financial situation to various services in January, citing where we are, what we can afford, and what we will lose without more income.

**Pledgers' Luncheon.** A catered lunch is scheduled for January 31, 2016 to thank all who have pledged. Addressing the lack of a Parish Life Committee chairperson, Enid asked the vestry members to assist whenever a social event is planned.

## Open Mic:

**The Epiphany pageant.** As in years past, the pageant will replace the 5:00 p.m. service; Gordon is leading the pageant preparation and planning.

**Website praise.** Denise praised the new website, still under construction for its welcoming nature and strong message to readers.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Betsy Hasegawa, *Junior Warden.*

## New Photos



We are always looking for new Ascension event photos for the website, facebook, and the slide show. If you have some you would like to share (from hikes, special services or events etc.), please email them to [leamanp@ascensionmd.org](mailto:leamanp@ascensionmd.org).

# CURRENT FINANCIAL STATUS

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## *Financial Update December, 2015*

As you may remember from previous updates, we have been carefully monitoring our income and expenses as we approached the end of 2015, together with formulating the budget for 2016. With the close of 2015, we now have preliminary end-of-year figures to share, along with an update on adopting a budget for 2016.

### December and Preliminary End-of-Year Financial Figures

In December, we had another strong month from an income perspective and as with November, we also had lower expenses than expected. As a result, we currently show positive net income for the month.

Total income for December was \$56,888. We received \$6,575 in Plate receipts and \$40,115 in Pledge income. Plate receipts were again lower than expected, while Pledge income was higher, along with Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income. Sandy Ridge Academy made a rental payment in December, which we may accrue or count toward January 2016 because of their previous payments during November.

For December, our total expenses were \$49,275. With the exception of Salaries and Benefits, all expense items were under budget for the month. We were over budget in Salaries and Benefits because we incurred more in Temporary Services for the month than projected. We remain under budget in Salaries and Benefits for the year. General Office, Utilities, and Facilities expenses were \$1,237, \$2,906, and \$1,911, respectively - all lower than projected. Our expenses for December reflect a credit for payments made in October and November toward our Diocesan pledge.

Based on December income and expenses, we had positive net income of \$7,613 for the month. For the year, we show total income of \$531,442, against expenses of \$554,646, for a total negative figure of \$23,204. That compares with a total negative net income figure of \$34,361 that was projected when we adopted the budget for the year. Thus, we made up ground over 2016, although obviously did not finish with a balanced budget.

Finally, the balance in the Endowment Fund was \$473,053 as of December 31, including \$153,827 being

held in the cash portion of the Fund. The balance in the Capital Improvements & Building Repairs fund is \$22,409.

### Development of 2016 Budget

As you may also know from other parish communications, Ascension's Vestry met in late December and again on January 10 to further discuss the budget for 2016. We have currently received 171 pledges totaling \$348,642. For 2015, we had pledge income of approximately \$392,000. As a result, we still have a ways to go in getting to a sustainable budget for 2016. To provide for the programs and activities most important to Ascension, we need to raise an additional \$50,000 - \$60,000 in pledge income.

Even with an additional \$50,000 - \$60,000 in pledge income, we will be faced with challenging decisions about what we can do in 2016 and drawing on Ascension's Endowment Fund to help make ends meet. At this pledge level, we will need to take steps, such as:

- Leaving Outreach and Christian Formation budgets at barebones levels.
- Continuing our Diocesan pledge at approximately 3% of income - our goal is to increase our pledge to 4% and continuing to increase it each year.
- Providing minimal support for community building activities.
- Maintaining clergy and staff compensation at current levels.

The Vestry will be discussing the 2016 budget at its meeting on February 7, 2016, and will update the parish on the status afterward. However, if you haven't yet made a pledge for 2016 or may be in a position to increase your pledge, please consider doing so. Every gift, regardless of size, makes a difference in our ability to provide the programs and activities we most value.

To make a pledge or increase your pledge, you may contact the church office, or pledge information can be found in the welcome area outside of the nave.

Howard Holland, *Treasurer and Chair, Operations and Finance Committee*, [hhollbike@verizon.net](mailto:hhollbike@verizon.net).



# The Ascendant

A Newsletter by and for Members and Friends of Church of the Ascension

February 2016

The Episcopal Church of the Ascension  
205 South Summit Ave.  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877-2315



*Address Service Requested*

*"We are ambassadors who represent Christ." - 2 Corinthians 5:20*

## Contact Us

Phone: 301.948.0122 Fax: 301.926.9012  
eca@ascensionmd.org www.ascensionmd.org

## Parish Staff

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Rector                     | Randy Lord-Wilkinson |
| Spanish Language Missioner | Javier García Ocampo |
| Minister of Music          | Jerrold Tidwell      |
| Seminarians                | Kate Siberine        |
|                            | Diana Gustafson      |
| Office Coordinator         | Kathy Van Arnum      |
| Communications             | Pia Leaman           |
| Children's Music Leader    | Howard Hanson        |
| Chapel Musicians           | Eric O'Loughlin      |
|                            | Samuel Munguia       |
| Sexton                     | Betty LaVern         |
| Nursery Director           | Giséle Lachance      |

## Sunday Services

7:45 a.m.—Holy Eucharist  
*"Meditative" service, no music - Main Church*

9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
*Classic sacred music of the Church accompanied by Choir and Organ—Main Church*

10:15 a.m.—Eucharist for Young Children and Families  
*Storytelling of the Gospel with children's songs—Chapel*

11:00 a.m.—Eucharist in Spanish  
*Songs and prayers in Spanish—Chapel*

11:15 a.m.—Holy Eucharist  
*Music and liturgy in the vernacular accompanied by instrumental ensemble—Main Church*

5:00 p.m.—"Last Chance Church" Eucharist  
*Informal service with music blending Gospel and jazz influences—Chapel*