

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

The Second Sunday of Easter : 23 April A.D. 2017

Dying into Life

Most of us probably grew up thinking that the Resurrection was a one-time miracle about Jesus, an anomaly that proved he was God. I believe that Jesus is actually naming and revealing what is happening everywhere and all the time in God. Jesus' resurrection is a statement about how reality works: always moving toward resurrection. As the Catholic funeral preface says, "Life is not ended but merely changed." This is the divine mystery of transformation, which is entirely evident in the physical universe. This is why I believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus, even if it is a new kind of physicality, which Paul struggles to describe (1 Corinthians 15:35ff).

Resurrection is not a miracle as much as it is an enduring relationship. The best way to speak about the Resurrection is not to say, "Jesus rose from the dead"--as if it was a self-generated miracle--but to say, "Jesus was raised from the dead" (as many early texts state). The Eternal Christ is thus revealed as the map, the blueprint, the promise, the pledge, the guarantee of what is happening everywhere, all summed up in one person so we can see it in personified form.

If you can understand Jesus as the human archetype, a stand-in for everybody and everything, you will get much closer to the Gospel message. I think this is exactly why Jesus usually called himself "The Son of Man." His resurrection is not so much a miracle that we can argue about, believe, or disbelieve, but an invitation to look deeper at what is always happening in the life process itself. Jesus, or any member of "the Body of Christ," cannot really die because we are participating in something eternal--the Cosmic Christ that came forth from God.

Death is not just physical dying, but going to the full depth of things, hitting the bottom, beyond where you are in control. And in that sense, we all probably go through many deaths in our lifetime. These deaths to the small self are tipping points, opportunities to choose transformation. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people turn bitter and look for someone to blame. So their death is indeed death for them, because they close down to growth and new life.

But if you do choose to walk through the depths--even the depths of your own sin and mistakes--you will come out the other side, knowing you've been taken there by a Source larger than yourself. Surely this is what it means to be saved. Being saved doesn't mean that you are any better than anyone else. It means you've allowed and accepted the mystery of transformation, which is always pure gift.

If we are to speak of miracles, the most miraculous thing of all is that God uses the very thing that would normally destroy you--the tragic, the sorrowful, the painful, the unjust--to transform and enlighten you. Now you are indestructible and there are no absolute dead ends. This is what we mean when we say we are "saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus." This is not a cosmic transaction, but a human transformation to a much higher level of love and consciousness. You have been plucked from the flames of any would-be death to the soul, and you have become a very different kind of human being in this world. Jesus is indeed saving the world.

- Richard Rohr O.F.M.

TO OUR VISITORS, NEWCOMERS, AND SEEKERS

We thank you for joining us today and hope you will return often.

At Ascension, our mission is to become "ambassadors of Christ," so we welcome you to this community of resident aliens. We invite you to fill out a welcome card (located in the rack at the ends of each pew).

TODAY AT ASCENSION

Preacher: Jason Cutshall

Refreshments and conversation follow every service in the Narthex.

The Nursery is open today from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It is in Room 2, in the rear hallway of the annex at the high school end of the building. Ask a welcome team member for directions.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Godly Play

Good Shepherd and World Communion.

In this week's lesson, the Good Shepherd knows all of the sheep, and the sheep know how the sound of His voice. The people of the world come to the table of the Good Shepherd to share the bread and the wine. We will use images of the Good Shepherd and World Communion to explore our own experiences.

A Joyful Path

The members of A Joyful Path are studying important world figures and their contributions to all humanity. Come and join us Sundays in room 11 during the 9 and 11:00 and 11:15 services. Plan on joining us next Sunday, April 30 at 10am during the One Ascension service. More specifics to be announced.

Yoga Classes



Randy's yoga class is every Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. in the Main Church.

These are gentle, entry level classes anyone may enjoy. No props are needed. There are some mats, blocks and blankets for those who want them. If you have your own mat, bring it. Wear loose fitting, comfortable clothing.

Tai Chi Class

Tai Chi classes are offered at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday afternoons in the Chapel; a good time of peace and balance in a lovely place at sunset. Please come and join us.

Contact Claire Rosser at 301.275.0617 or Cjrosser@aol.com if you have any questions.

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 meet the first and third Monday of each month. Contact Lori Perine at lperine@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

Youth Group Schedule Spring 2017

- Today - Regular Meeting in the Undercroft
- April 30 - Youth Sunday: NO YOUTH GROUP BUT LOTS OF CHURCH TIME
- May 21 - Picnic at Hight Walkers'
- June 25—Philly Work Camp

LIFE LONG LEARNING

Small Group for Families with Young Children

The small group for families with young children meets the first Sunday of every month at 11:15 a.m. in the church library. We are currently discussing Brian McLaren's *We Make the Road by Walking*. If you have any questions, feel free to contact at sarahanear@gmail.com

Spanish Classes

Come and take part in Ascension's Spanish Class on Mondays from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Ascension House. You don't need to know Spanish to come, because we get together to learn and/or practice. For more information contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

New Book for Wednesday Morning Group

Parker Palmer's *Let Your Life Speak* is the next book in the queue for the Wednesday Morning Book Group. In preparation for next Wednesday's discussion, read through chapter 2. The group meets in the Library from 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Music Program for Sunday School

Next Sunday, April 30, please bring the Sunday School's children to the choir room by 10:15 a.m.

The music program will last no more than 10 minutes. If you have any questions, you can e-mail me at howarddhanson@gmail.com. - Howard Hanson

Town Hall Meeting on the Budget, Today

Join Randy and members of the Vestry in the main church right after the 9:00 a.m. service (about 10:15) for an update on steps taken to resolve the budget deficit.

Thank You, Jason Cutshall!

Jason's Party is today after the 11:00/11:15 services in the Undercroft!

LIFE AT ASCENSION

2017 Ascension Cookbook Update

Many, many thanks to everyone who has generously shared a recipe for the new Ascension cookbook. What started as a trickle has become a deluge! We know that the community's tremendous response is due to everyone who tapped someone's shoulder, stood up to speak in church or otherwise helped spread the word and drum up enthusiasm for our project. Nothing works like the personal touch, and we are so grateful for everyone's help!

Although we have moved on to cataloging all of the submissions, we are still accepting recipes. So if you have a treasured recipe you'd like to share, just send it our way. You can also send us recipes in Spanish. Our goal is to produce a bilingual cookbook that reflects who we are as a community. Feel free to contact Zadinga Ogada at z_zulu@msn.com with any questions or to forward a recipe.

Don't forget to mark your calendars with our next tasting event, taking place at the luncheon immediately following our "One Ascension Sunday Service" at 10:00 a.m. on April 30th, which this year is also Youth Sunday. We are very eager to actually taste your proffered creations and would be so pleased and honored if you would bring a dish to the luncheon. Just email Zadinga beforehand so we know what to expect.

We are very lucky to belong to such a dynamic community. Keep an eye out for more updates, and we'll see you April 30th!

Your Cookbook Committee, Janet, Rachel, Sari, Susan and Zadinga

ONE ASCENSION SUNDAY IS ONLY A WEEK AWAY!

We are looking forward to our inaugural One Ascension service taking place at 10 a.m. next Sunday, April 30th in the main Church. Our church is blessed to be able to offer six services each week, but on the 30th we will be celebrating our community as a whole, as one Ascension.

As April 30th is youth Sunday, our Youth Group will lead a bilingual Spanish and English service, and the 9 a.m. choir and 11:15 a.m. instrumental ensemble will bring their talents to support our musical program. As always, families are encouraged to worship together and children are welcome in the sanctuary. Nevertheless, Godly Play and Joyful Path sessions will be held during the service for any children who would like to attend, and the nursery will be staffed as usual.

Our fellowship will continue when we move downstairs for a potluck meal in the undercroft immediately following the service. The church will provide roast chicken, and we need donations of main dishes, sides, appetizers and desserts to round out the meal. Our Spanish language community will share their tradition of commemorating Children's Day at Ascension with a special celebration of our youngest members at the luncheon, so we hope all the children in our community will attend.

Let's celebrate the many blessings that make us Ascension.

See you next Sunday!

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Acolyte Training

At 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 7 in the main church veteran acolyte Ray Chin (who serves at the 7:45 service nearly weekly) will conduct a training for both old and new acolytes. No age limits!

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Men's Shelter Lunch Program

The Men's Shelter Lunch program provides bagged lunches for homeless men, 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.

Mobile Med

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 or 240.372.3652.

Gaithersburg HELP

This organization provides emergency food and other support to needy families in Gaithersburg. Non-perishable food collected at Ascension every week, and during specific holiday in-gatherings, helps to stock the pantry. Donations may be brought to church at any time and left in the narthex. For more information, contact Melanie Mitchell at 301.519.1074 or melanie.mitchell@verizon.net

Lord's Table Soup Kitchen

There is an opportunity to serve at the soup kitchen on the first Saturday or third Monday each month at 1:00 p.m. (prep work) or 3:00 p.m. (serving) across the street at St. Martin's Church. Contact one of our experienced team leaders, Page Salazar (Saturdays, pagesalazar@ymail.com) or Jean Cohn (Mondays, spangle1@comcast.net). We can always use more volunteers!

Ministerio Felicidad

Ascension members prepare lunches and send love and prayers to day laborers in the neighborhood of the church. Join Javier at 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 29 in the church kitchen.

May Ascendant

Please email Eleni Hailu by Wednesday, April 26, if you have anything for the March Ascendant at comm@ascensionmd.org. Thank you!

CONTACT US

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- ◆ Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m. -4:00 p.m.
- ◆ Phone: 301.948.0122 ◆ Fax: 301.926.9012
- ◆ Randy's Cell: 301.801.4347
- ◆ Javier's Cell: 202.903.6426
- ◆ Prayer requests: Fill out a yellow prayer request card on the table outside the office, in the Chapel or e-mail the office at office@ascensionmd.org.

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LEADERSHIP AT ASCENSION

Senior Warden: Betsy Hasegawa
Junior Warden: Janet King

Vestry:

2018: Berenice Rodriguez, Avin Lalmansingh,
Gary McLaughlin
2019: Rose Buck, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner
2020: Gordon Donnelly, Meredith Horan, Luis Pedron
Sari Stoddard, *Clerk of the Vestry*
Howard Holland, *Treasurer*

Christian Formation for Children: Megan Didavi ~ Christian
Formation for Youth: Angie Hight-Walker ~ Facilities: Ted Be-
dell Finance: Howard Holland ~ Mission: Paul Boynton ~ Pas-
toral Care: Randy Lord-Wilkinson Personnel: Jean Cohn ~
Worship: Carleton MacDonald

Delegates to Diocesan Convention:

Kristen Keating, Carleton MacDonald, Sue Snay
Alternate: Mardia Dennis

Cycles of Prayer

In the Diocesan cycle of prayer, we pray for
St. Mark's Church, DC
St. Mark's Church, Fairland
St. George's Church, Glenn Dale
St. George's Church, Valley Lee
St. George's, DC

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

MONDAY, APRIL 24

1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Library
6:30 p.m. Ensemble Rehearsal—Main Church
6:30 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 4
6:30 p.m. Spanish Class—Ascension House
7:00 p.m. Jr. Girl Scout Meeting—Room 6
7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal—Choir Room

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

10:00 a.m. Yoga—Chapel
11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
6:00 p.m. Spanish Bible Study—Ascension House
7:00 p.m. Codependents Anonymous—Room 1
7:00 p.m. Stillwater Mindfulness Group—Chapel
8:30 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

10:00 a.m. Wednesday Morning Book Group—Library
1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Library
7:00 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1
8:00 p.m. Gamblers' Anonymous—Chapel

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

11:00 a.m. Episcopal Seeking Seniors- Asbury
4:00 p.m. Tai Chi—Chapel
6:00 p.m. Bariatric Support Group—Chapel

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

1:00 p.m. Al Anon—Room 1

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

6:00 a.m. Ministerio Felicidad
9:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Chapel
11:00 a.m. Al-Anon—Undercroft Commons
11:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

8:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal
10:00 a.m. One Ascension/Youth Sunday—Main Church
10:00 a.m. Godly Play
10:00 a.m. Joyful Path
10:15 a.m. Music Program—Choir Room

Church Attendance	Apr. 2	Apr. 9	
7:45 a.m.	29	22	
9:00 a.m.	103	106	
10:15 a.m.	18	13	
11:00 a.m. Spanish Service	—	60	
11:15 am	97	59	
11:30 a.m. At Sunrise	—	9	
5:00 p.m.	13	17	
Total:	260	286	

Church Attendance	Apr. 16
7:45 a.m.	42
9:00 a.m.	167
11:00 a.m. Main Church	127
11:00 a.m. Chapel	86
11:30 am at Sunrise	16
12:30 a.m. Chapel	41
Total:	479