

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

The Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost: 6 August A.D. 2017

"How We Got the Bible"

Some people over a period of time wrote some things down. Much of what they wrote down was oral tradition which had already been passed around for a while, then eventually written down. What they eventually wrote down covers a multitude of genres, from poetry to narrative to history to gospel to apocalyptic-as well as a number of letters.

These people who wrote these things down had agendas, views, perspectives, and particular points they wanted to make. When you read the minor prophets, you're reading the birth of what we call social justice (You can draw a direct line from the righteous indignation in the book of Amos to the Occupy Wall Street movement). Luke is writing his account of Jesus's life because there are dimensions of Jesus's life that he wants his readers to know about. The Torah was assembled in exile, where the defining liberation story of the Exodus would have had particular immediate resonance. The apostle Paul saw Timothy like a son and wants to impart to him particular wisdom about what it meant to follow Jesus in Asia Minor in the first century.

From the end of first century through the next several hundred years, various councils and church leaders decided that certain books were what they called canonical (belonging in the Bible) and others weren't.

They developed criteria and ways of evaluating which books had certain characteristics and which didn't. There was lots of discussion and debate about this. (As late as the 1500's a church leader named Martin Luther was saying disparaging things about certain books of the New Testament, suggesting they be left out.)

When you affirm the Bible (and whatever particular canon you affirm) you are in the same breath affirming that you agree with the particular leaders and councils who selected those particular books to comprise the Bible. This is especially true when people say the Bible is God's word... To affirm the Bible as God's word, you first must affirm the people who decided that it is God word, and their decisions about this book vs. that book, this particular library vs. that particular library.

The Bible, then, is a library of books written by humans, edited and compiled by humans, and ultimately called The Bible by... humans. And what these humans affirmed was that this particular library of books (Give or take a few disagreements) is more than just a library of books. There are a number of words that have been used both in the scriptures and in recent history to describe this more-than-just-a-library dimension to this particular library. Inspired. Authoritative. Divine. God breathed.

To believe that the Bible is both a library of books and also more than just a library books takes faith. You have to believe that there's something else going on in these pages, something just below the surface, something that unites all those writers writing over all those years and then all those people making all of those decisions about which of the things those writers wrote belong in the particular arrangement of writings we call the Bible.

These truths about this library and how we got it help us understand what the Bible is and how (not) to talk about it. First, circular arguments are not helpful. For example The Bible is divinely inspired because it says it is. Any book could say that. Not only is this argument not helpful, but it's terribly confusing for people who have never read the Bible. Second, insisting that this book was written by God is not helpful. It was written by actual people. For people who are new to the Bible, telling them that it wasn't written by people is terribly confusing as well. Start with the human, claim that first, then work your way to the divine. Third, the Bible is not an argument. The people who wrote these things down had very real experiences of the divine and did everything they could to put those experiences in words. Those experiences were filtered through their consciousness, culture, worldview, and personal history. The stories in the Bible were told because they meant something profound to the people who first wrote them. All doctrine and dogma and theology was first mystical experience. Someone had an encounter with the divine. And then they set out to articulate what happened.

What we see in this particular library is a story, a story that unfolds over time, a story about growing human awareness of the divine. It's a vision of the world that evolves in its understanding of who we are, where we're headed, and what it means to be human. This story has a number of particular characteristics that unite it, traits and twists and revelations that are why so many people like me have affirmed this book and these stories as unique, inspired, and revelatory.

Now when I talk about consciousness, filters, and awareness, I'm talking about the thing that happens when people in a real place and a real time have an encounter with the divine.

From *What is the Bible?* a new book by Rob Bell

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: Randy Lord-Wilkinson

Refreshments and conversation follow every service in the downstairs in lower atrium.

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

Tai Chi

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. Please come and join us.

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

Education for Ministry (EFM) 2017-2018

In order for Ascension's Education for Ministry class to begin on or about September 12th, we need six people to have their registrations completed by August 25th. Peg Ruppel and David Mitchell renewed their mentor training in May, and now it's time to get the class registered. The \$375 tuition covers all books and materials.

If you want to explore your faith, the Bible, and the church more deeply, this is your chance. EFM is a distance learning program from the School of Theology at the University of the South (Sewanee, visit <http://efm.sewanee.edu>).

Questions? Concerns? Please contact Peggy Ruppel (ph.301.377.0728; email plr301@gmail.com) or David Mitchell (ph. 240.454.1904; email newlywed98@comcast.net) for more information.

Thanks, everyone! Peg

Spanish Class

There is no Spanish Class on August 7, 14 and 21. We will resume the class on August 28. For more information contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

Children's Formation

Starting Sunday, September 17, all Sunday school classes will be held between the 9:00 and 11:00 services. Adult Christian Formation will also be offered at this time. We are excited about consolidating the two groups into one larger group. We hope children will become more involved in the church service by doing welcome team, helping with alter guild, reading, or whatever their talents and interests bring them to do. Adult Formation choices will include the opportunity to learn what their children are learning and how to help them see God in everyday life.

Wednesday Book Group: Christ Actually: The Son of God for the Secular Age

On Wednesday, September 13, the book group will begin to read and discuss James Carroll's learned, extended, and beautifully written *Christ Actually: The Son of God for the Secular Age*. This is actually [sic] cheapest in hard cover from Amazon at \$6.98.

The Amazon synopsis: "A New York Times bestselling and widely admired Catholic writer explores how we can retrieve transcendent faith in modern times. Critically acclaimed and bestselling author James Carroll has explored every aspect of Christianity, faith, and Jesus Christ except this central one: What can we believe about—and how can we believe in—Jesus in the twenty-first century in light of the Holocaust and other atrocities of the

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twentieth century and the drift from religion that followed?

"What Carroll has discovered through decades of writing and lecturing is that he is far from alone in clinging to a received memory of Jesus that separates him from his crucial identity as a Jew, and therefore as a human. Yet if Jesus was not taken as divine, he would be of no interest to us. What can that mean now? Paradoxically, the key is his permanent Jewishness. No Christian himself, Jesus actually transcends Christianity.

"Drawing on both a wide range of scholarship as well as his own acute searching as a believer, Carroll takes a fresh look at the most familiar narratives of all—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Far from another book about the "historical Jesus," he takes the challenges of science and contemporary philosophy seriously. He retrieves the power of Jesus' profound ordinariness, as an answer to his own last question—what is the future of Jesus Christ?—as the key to a renewal of faith."

LIFE AT ASCENSION

August Recital at Ascension on Sunday, August 20 at 7:30 p.m.

Come and enjoy an evening of German, French and American classics, including works by J.S. Bach, Griffes, Burton, Varese, CPE Bach, and Hue performed by Cristian Dohler Rodas, on the flute; joined by Jerrold Tidwell and Janghyo Yoo on piano in the Main Church. This recital is free and open to the public, and there will be a reception afterwards in the lower atrium.

Adopt-a-Space at Ascension

Our worship and common spaces are sacramental in the sense that we rendezvous with God and one another in them. It is therefore meet and right that we tend them as the gift that they are. This sign-up lists most of the spaces we inhabit from week to week. They do get cleaned, but there's a lot of traffic in and out of our building and there are plenty of unclaimed artifacts to prove it!

This is an invitation for groups or individuals to "adopt-a-space" to declutter and re-order (where there is furniture).

I have assigned some groups to care for spaces with which they have a special relationship, such as the main church's sacristy, where the Altar Guild lives out its mission to prepare the holy of holies for each of to encounter at every service. Some spaces got claimed immediately, such as the Chapel nave and sacristy, by "regulars" at the 11:00o'clock service.

There are a few left! Won't you join in? Sign up by clicking this link: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70a0a4caba82da75-adoptospace>

New Parish Administrator Position Filled

In keeping with Ascension's need to be financially conscious, the Vestry and I have elected to place our accountant on retainer for as-needed items which will save the church \$1,800 a month. In addition, we have combined the responsibilities of Bookkeeper and the old Parish Administrator positions into one position. Ascension needed to have a person who was able to do all aspects of the new position. After considerable prayer and thought, Lin Keene of Clarksburg will start on August 9th as our new Parish Administrator. Lin has an accounting degree, some church experience, and is bilingual.
- RAL

COOKBOOK COMMITTEE: Typists Needed!

The Ascension cookbook project is well under way! As you know, we spent the spring collecting recipes, and we've now moved on to production. We are working with Morris Press, an online publisher that specializes in community cookbooks, and we are looking for volunteers to help type recipes into Morris's online recipe platform. By entering the recipes ourselves, we can not only create a bilingual cookbook, but we will also have greater control over the finished design of the project.

All you need is Internet access. Recipes can be typed at your convenience, from any location, 24 hours a day. We will provide the church's user name and password as well as detailed instructions. If you can help, please email Sari at sari.stoddard@verizon.net. Our deadline to enter the recipes is August 15th.

Yard Sale & Car Wash- August 26

There will be a Yard Sale and Car Wash on Saturday, August 26, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If you have clothes that you want to donate, bring them to the office. Heavy items and furniture should be brought to the Ascension House Porch. Remember that you can bring your car to be washed. We also need help. If you are available, you are welcome to join us! For more information, please contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org or 202-903-6426

Zumba at Ascension!

Summer is here and is always a good opportunity to get in shape. For that reason, we will have Zumba classes at Ascension every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in Undercroft Commons. Zumba is a dance fitness program created by Colombian dancer and choreographer Alberto "Beto" Perez during the 1990s. Zumba involves dance and aerobic movements performed to energetic music. The choreography incorporates hip-hop, soca, samba, salsa, merengue and mambo.

Skywatching - Solar Eclipse Party

The Gaithersburg Community Museum is hosting a free Solar Eclipse event at Observatory Park on Monday, August 21, 2017, from 1 to 4 p.m.

As always, stargazing events are weather permitting. Last minute announcements will be posted on the Museum's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/GaithersburgCommunityMuseum>. Also, please note that there are no restrooms available, and parking adjacent to Observatory Park is very limited. There will be overflow parking available in the St. Martin's field at the corner of DeSillum Avenue and Route 355, one block from the park.

For more information contact the Gaithersburg Community Museum: 301-258-6160 or museum@gaitthersburgmd.gov

The Lunch Bunch at St. Nick's

We meet on the third Tuesday of every month 11:30 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. at St. Nick's. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 15, 2017. After a delicious potluck luncheon together, we will play Bingo with winners choosing from many interesting prizes on our prize table! Newcomers and guests do not have to bring food for the first time.

We are also encouraging everyone to bring at least one non-perishable, kid-friendly food item to add to St. Nick's Summer Food Drive. Many children are hungry this summer as school is out and there are no free breakfast and lunch programs. Let's help the Germantown HELP Food Pantry meet the higher demand for food!

Come prepared to shop at the St. Nick's Crafters' Table, too! We are featuring many handmade works of art and other interesting items. As was done last year, you may make a donation in any amount for any of the items and all proceeds will be donated to the Deibel-Mahan Fund at St. Nick's. You may make your donation in cash or, for tax purposes, by check with Deibel-Mahan Fund in the memo.

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Help Provide School Supplies and Backpacks for Children in Need

It is that time of year! Ascension is collecting school supplies to provide backpacks for students (kindergarten through 5th grade) at Summit Hall Elementary School, Gaithersburg as part of the Linkages to Learning Program. The purpose of this program is to improve the well-being of children and their families through collaborative delivery of school services that address social, economic, health, and emotional issues that interfere with the academic success of a child. Lists of supplies for each grade level are available in the narthex and on the website. Please take a list or share a list with a friend. A monetary donation of \$14 is welcome to help cover the cost of the backpacks. Please place monetary donations in the collection plate. Please include "for backpacks" on the memo line of the check. Please leave the supplies you are bringing in Room 1. On Sunday August 20, we will gather in Room 1 after the 9 am service to stuff the backpacks. All help will be appreciated. We can work together while we visit and get to know each other. Thank you for your support. For any question, contact Kristen Keating at KristenKeating@westat.com

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. The next program is August 20 at 10:15 a.m. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help, or sign up at <http://bit.ly/1VAKEz8>.

Mobile Med

Every Tuesday, for (at least) the summer months, Mobile Med has agreed that we can close the waiting room at 1:00 p.m. We will still list a person for the 1p shift in case the day is particularly hot or rainy and we need to keep the waiting room open until 3:00 p.m. I will notify the "on call" 1:00 p.m. person that morning if they need to be there.

The 11 a.m.-1:00 p.m. person will now close the Chapel at 1:00 p.m. I have put instructions for closing in the volunteer folder; you can also contact Jean Cohn if there are questions 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

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, September 23 in the church kitchen. If you have any questions, Contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

CONTACT US

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- ◆ Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m.
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- ◆ 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.

Bishop of Washington - The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde
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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
Church of the Transfiguration

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

MONDAY, AUGUST 7

1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
6:00 p.m. Ensemble Rehearsal—Main Church
6:30 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 4
7:00 p.m. Listening Hearts Community—Library

TUESDAY, AUGUST 8

11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting—Library
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, AUGUST 9

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

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10

10:00 a.m. Yoga—Undercroft Commons
4:00 p.m. Tai Chi—Chapel
7:30 p.m. Zumba—Undercroft Commons

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11

1:00 p.m. Al Anon—Room 1

SATURDAY, AUGUST 12

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

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13

Preacher: Javier Ocampo

7:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
10:15 a.m. Service for Young Children—Chapel
11:00 a.m. Misa en Espanol—Chapel
11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
1:00 p.m. Pastoral Care Team Meeting—Library
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist: Last Chance Church—
Chapel

Attendance	July 16	July 23	July 30
7:45 a.m.	20	24	
9:00 a.m.	56	52	
10:15 a.m.	12	12	159
11:00 a.m. Spanish Service	22	42	
11:15 am	44	51	
5:00 p.m.	8	7	
Total:	162	188	