

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

The First Sunday after Christmas Day: 31 December A.D. 2017

Incarnation

'THE WORD BECAME flesh,' wrote John, 'and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). That is what incarnation means. It is untheological. It is unsophisticated. It is undignified. But according to Christianity it is the way things are.

"All religions and philosophies which deny the reality or the significance of the material, the fleshly, the earth-bound, are themselves denied. Moses at the burning bush was told to take off his shoes because the ground on which he stood was holy ground (Exodus 3:5), and incarnation means that all ground is holy ground because God not only made it but walked on it, ate and slept and worked and died on it. If we are saved anywhere, we are saved here. And what is saved is not some diaphanous distillation of our bodies and our earth but our bodies and our earth themselves. Jerusalem becomes the New Jerusalem coming down out of Heaven like a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2). Our bodies are sown perishable and raised imperishable (1 Corinthians 15:42).

"One of the blunders religious people are particularly fond of making is the attempt to be more spiritual than God."

- Originally published in *Wishful Thinking*, by Frederick Buechner

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 lower atrium.

The Nursery is open today from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 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.

There will be no Tai Chi on December 28th. We will resume in January. Tai Chi will be cancelled any Thursday that schools are closed for bad weather this winter.

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

Children's Formation

In observance of the New Year holiday, Godly Play and Joyful Path will not meet this week.

The members of A Joyful Path are moving their classroom upstairs to room 2 (the old nursery). Come and join us in our new setting Sunday January 7th after the 9am service.

Spanish Class

Come and take part in Ascension's Spanish Class on Mondays from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 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 ocampoj@ascensionmd.org

Thursday Morning Yoga

It will be on hiatus for the season and will resume at 10:00 a.m. on January 11, 2018.

Wednesday Morning Book Group

Night, by Elie Weisel, is the next selection. Read the first three chapters in preparation for the group's next meeting on January 3. The group meets weekly in the Library from 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Special Christmastide Offering

Dear Friends and Members of Ascension:

At its most recent meeting on December 17th, the Vestry voted unanimously to take up a special Christmastide collection to support the cause of Henry Sanchez, whose story is related to us by parish member Lucelia Justiniano, an immigration lawyer.

"Henry Sanchez, whose case obtained national attention when he was falsely accused of raping a girl at Rockville High School, was for a time the "poster child", or scapegoat, for anti-immigrant sentiment around the country.

"All charges against Henry were dismissed. In the process, his father Adolfo was detained by immigration authorities, forcing his two other children (ages 21 and 14) out of their apartment. Adolfo was released from ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) custody on a \$20,000 bond (which seems inordinately high since he has no criminal background at all) but the family was able to pull together enough money to pay it through loans from friends.

"After Henry's charges were dismissed, the state released him into ICE custody and now is holding him on a \$40,000 bond which the family is unable to pay. Adolfo's wife (Henry's stepmother) has also struggled greatly with caring for her 9 children since she depended on him to help provide for her children (the youngest 7 living with them are 2, 4, 9, 9, 13, 15, and 21 years old). Henry lived on his own from the age of 14 to 18 when he reunited with his father.

"He has never before been in any trouble with the police here or in his native Guatemala. He endured substantial physical abuse at the hands of his mother while he lived with her in Guatemala and fled Guatemala due to gang threats. There is no doubt that he needs guidance and therapy to overcome his past trauma. However, what he has received so far in this country is downright injustice. Adolfo, Henry, and his two brothers are all currently in deportation proceedings.

"I come across so many devastating stories but I feel like extending a hand to this family will renew their hopes in the U.S.

"Thank you.
Lucelia R. Justiniano, Esq."

If you want to make a contribution to Henry's fund, you may write a check to 'Ascension' with 'Henry' in the memo line. We realize that this is a controversial project, and so all of us in the leadership circle want to be available to hear your concerns and questions, if you have any. Our pictures and names are in the narthex (and have been for years), so you know who we are!

We are also starting a bit late, but remember that Christmas lasts until January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany. So if we can have your offering in hand by Sunday, January 7 we would be most grateful!

Christmastide Blessings!
The Clergy and Vestry of Ascension

Epiphany Pageant - The King's Birthday

Ascension's annual Epiphany Pageant goes up at 5:00 pm. on Sunday, January 7, 2018, in the context of the weekly Eucharist celebrated at this time. It will take place in the main church.

There are parts and support roles for people of all ages.

The next rehearsal is scheduled on Saturday, January 6th - 10:30-12:00 noon in the main church.

See you there!

Thanks, Gordon
vagordon1@yahoo.com

Nursery Closing after Today

At the most recent meeting of Ascension's teachers with the Rector, it was clear that the "nursery" has not been utilized as originally intended for toddlers and infants up to age 3. This has been the case for some time. Parents with infants and toddlers attend the 10:15 service (often with a child on the way!) or one of our other services. Starting January 7, 2018, Room 2 will be the Joyful Path classroom (for kids in 3rd to 5th grade), and Room 4 will become a comfortable place for parents with children who need a "break" from sitting in church. There will be comfortable furniture, a bathroom, and in time a monitor so that the service can be seen and heard there.

Men's Shelter Lunch Program

The Men's Shelter Lunch program provides bagged lunches for homeless men, assembled in the Undercroft once a month. Supplies are donated by Ascension members. Depending on the season, we provide forty to eighty lunches a month.

The next time the program operates is January 21 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>.

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. **Please: no perishables.** For more information, contact Melanie Mitchell at 301.519.1074 or melanie.mitchell@verizon.net

Mobile Med

Every Tuesday, Mobile Med will be open for the service until 3:00 p.m. Starting January 2nd, our Tuesday Mobile Med clinic at Ascension House will move to the fixed site at Rollins Avenue for the cold winter months. It is too cold in the van for the staff, patients and equipment. Around February 1st, I will request blackout dates for March and April. If there are questions, contact us at spangle1@comcast.net or 240.372.3652.

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, January 27 in the church kitchen. If you have any questions, Contact Javier at ocampo@ascensionmd.org

PLEDGE UPDATE AS OF DECEMBER 27, 2017

121 Pledges for a total of \$283,196

Thanks to those below who have pledged to the annual giving campaign these past couple of weeks:

- ◆ Isaac & Josephine Clarke
- ◆ Gina Fera
- ◆ Tom & Denise Lionetti
- ◆ Winsome J Palmer
- ◆ Algernon Thomas
- ◆ Bendu B Toee
- ◆ Kathleen Bainbridge
- ◆ Aloysius & Frances Farrah
- ◆ Barbara Mansfield
- ◆ Peter Maroulis
- ◆ Mabel Olivera
- ◆ Ted & Kelly Bedell
- ◆ Carolyn Dowling/ John Bjerke
- ◆ Terry & Kristin Johnsen
- ◆ Ruby King
- ◆ Chikezie Nwankwo
- ◆ Alice E Padmore
- ◆ Marion Rice
- ◆ Neil & Nathalie Scott
- ◆ Linda G Sye
- ◆ Laura Ann Whirley
- ◆ Robert A Wilkinson
- ◆ Kathryn Froelich
- ◆ Fayemi & Christina Johnson
- ◆ Daisy & Kemal Okudo

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.

Bishop of Washington - The Rt. Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde
mebudde@edow.org, 202.537.6550

Rector - (The Rev.) Randy Lord-Wilkinson
ral@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 12

Assistant to the Rector—The Rev. Javier Garcia Ocampo
ocampo@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 16

Interim Ministers of Music
9:00 a.m. Clarice Snyder
11:15 a.m. Karina Gomez McCarty

Parish Administrator - Lin Keene
office@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 10

Media Specialist—Eleni Hailu
comm@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 14

Altar Guild Directors, Mardia Dennis, 301.540.4499
mard908@gmail.com, Dotty Pfadenhauer, dottypfa@aol.com
and Georgana Maines, mainesgnh@verizon.net

Nursery Attendant—Brenda Alvarez,
brendaalvarezduque@hotmail.com

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 Epiphany, DC
Welcome Table and Street Church,
Church of the Epiphany, DC
Epiphany Church, Forestville
Provincial Youth Retreat (January 5-7)
The Feast of the Epiphany (January 6)

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

Monday, January 1

OFFICE CLOSED

- 1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Room 1
- 7:00 p.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1
- 7:00 p.m. Listening Hearts Community—Library

Tuesday, January 2

OFFICE CLOSED

- 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, January 3

- 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, January 4

- 4:00 p.m. Tai Chi—Chapel
- 7:30 p.m. Choir Rehearsal—Choir Room
- 7:30 p.m. Zumba—Undercroft

Friday, January 5

- 1:00 p.m. Al Anon—Room 1
- 6:00 p.m. Couples 12-Step Program—Room 1

Saturday, January 6

- 9:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Chapel
- 10:30 a.m. Epiphany Pageant Rehearsal—Main Church
- 11:00 a.m. Al-Anon—Undercroft
- 11:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

Sunday, January 7

- Preacher: Randy Lord-Wilkinson
- 7:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 8:00 a.m. Immigration Consultants—Library
- 9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 10:00 a.m. Latin Choir—Room 1
- 10:15 a.m. Adult Class—Library
- 10:15 a.m. Godly Play—Room 6
- 10:15 a.m. Joyful Path—Room 2
- 10:15 a.m. Service for Young Children—Chapel
- 11:00 a.m. Eucaristia en Espanol—Chapel
- 11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 3:45 p.m. Epiphany Pageant Rehearsal—Main Church
- 5:00 p.m. Epiphany Pageant & Service—Main Church

Attendance	December 3	December 10	December 17
7:45 a.m.	30	26	27
9:00 a.m.	87	62	74
10:15 a.m.	9	0	5
11:00 a.m. Spanish	43	31	42
11:15 am	42	44	32
5:00 p.m.	12	13	12
Total:	223	176	192

Attendance	December 24	December 25
10:00 a.m.	99	58
5:00 p.m.	54	—
7:00 p.m.	106	—
7:00 p.m. Spanish Service	30	—
9:00 p.m.	91	—
Total:	380	58