

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

The Second Sunday of Advent : 4 December A.D. 2016

The Birth of the Christ

At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God, which is never at our disposal, from which God disposes of our lives, which is inaccessible to the fantasies of our own mind or the brutalities of our own will.

This little point of nothingness and of absolute poverty is the pure glory of God written in us, as our poverty, as our indigence, as our sonship. It is like a pure diamond blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody, and if we could see it, we would see these billions of points of light coming together in the face and blaze of a sun that would make all the darkness and cruelty of life vanish completely.

I have no program for this seeing. It is only given. But the gate of heaven is everywhere.

Thomas Merton

New Website Launched

We just launched our new website. What is New:



- A responsive design automatically adapts itself to a particular viewing environment such as desktop, tablet or mobile.
 - Online electronic giving
 - Signup to different subscription directly from our website:
 - Analytic tools to track the traffic to the website which helps to analyze the engagement of the site visitors.
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Ascension's Cookbook Committee Needs You!

Do you love to cook and bake? Are you wiz at organization and planning? Are you a stickler for good punctuation? Well, come and join us! It has been 22 years since Keeping the Feast, Ascension's last community cookbook, was published under Father Joe Clark. Much has changed at Ascension. We have new leadership and many new members, along with new programs and initiatives. What hasn't changed are the feelings of cohesion and welcome that set us apart, and we can't think of a better way to celebrate everything that's great about our community than with a new cookbook!

We are looking for a mix of skills and perspectives to help collect and organize recipes, as well as oversee production and sales. If you are interested in helping craft Ascension's next community cookbook, please contact Zadinga Ogada (z_zulu@msn.com or 202-256-7237) by December 31st. We anticipate holding our first planning meeting in the early part of next year.

Let's get cooking!

Youth Group Christmas Party at Rockin' Jump

We are having the Ascension Youth Group Christmas party at Rockin' Jump near the Montgomery County Airport on Sunday December 11th. <http://mdm.rockinjump.com/> Please arrive at 5:45 pm so we can get settled in before our jump time starts at 6 pm start. We will jump for 90 minutes and then have dinner and fellowship until 8 pm. The cost is \$20 per person and that includes everything. Scholarships are available. Everyone MUST have a signed waiver in the system to jump. Please bring an unwrapped gift (~\$10) for a person in grades 5-8 that we will donate to the St. James-the school we support in Philadelphia and where we will go to Work Camp.

Memorial to the Lost(Caring for Our Community)

On December 17th the Ascension Youth Group will lead the congregation in establishing a "Memorial to the Lost", which is a moving display to increase public awareness of the toll on our region of gun violence. T-shirts will be hung to honor each life lost. Please join us at 2:00 pm. <http://heedinggodscall.org/content/heeding-gods-call-memorials-lost>

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 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

Sunday School "Happenings"

Besides our usual intriguing stories and insightful discussions in Godly Play (preschool - 2nd grade) and Joyful Path (3rd-5th grade), we have three new "happenings" to celebrate! The first, which has already been announced, is "Music Sunday", when both classes join our children's music director, Howard Hansen for a short music lesson on the last Sunday of the month. Secondly, we are making Christmas cards and ornaments for the residents of Sunrise retirement community who receive communion from Ascension's lay ministers. Last, but perhaps most important for you to know, right now, is we will be meeting on December 11 after the 9:00 and 11:00 services, to get ready for the Epiphany pageant. Hope we have even more participants than we had for last year's outstanding performance!

Yoga Classes

Randy's yoga class is every Thursday at 10:00 a.m. in the chapel. 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 is an ancient tradition that helps us feel healthy and relaxed. It is a moving meditation. Claire Rosser proposes to lead a group through the 88 steps in the Yang Long Form on Thursdays from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the chapel. For detailed information: <http://www.ascensionmd.org/tai-chi-class/>

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

Cell Group News

Once in a month, the group for parents of small children, facilitated by Sarah and Brian Annear will meet in the Library at 11:00 a.m. and the next meeting is today. While the group originated from the 10:15 service, anyone who fits the profile is welcome! You can read the book's preface and introduction at the below Amazon link. <http://amzn.to/2d87Apx> It is based on this text from Genesis: <http://bit.ly/13yDft0> Feel free to bring snacks/toys to help distract the little ones.

Wednesday Morning Book Group

The Wednesday Morning Book Group continues exploration of *Finding God in the Waves: How I Lost My Faith and Found it Again Through Science*, by Mike McHargue. From Amazon.com: "From the host of the popular podcasts, The Liturgists Podcast and Ask Science Mike, a story of having faith, losing it, and finding it again through science—revealing how the latest in neuroscience, physics, and biology help us understand God, faith, and ourselves." For a fuller description and to purchase, go to <http://amzn.to/2ecQ9DC>

In preparation for this Wednesday's discussion, read Chapters 6 and 7.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

The Listening Heart Community

We have been discussing possible times to try to get together outside of the regular Sunday service, in the format of an informal Bible study or book reading. Because we all have small children, we would also like to include snacks and a play space. Weeknights are difficult for most of us, so we are proposing the following times to get together, once a month:

Sundays, before or after the 10:15 service (something like 9:30 or 11:15 am). Saturday or Sundays post-nap time (something like 4 or 5:00 pm). What would everyone prefer?

If we meet before or after the 10:15 Sunday service, we could find a space at the church. If we meet in the afternoon on Saturday or Sunday, we could meet at individual homes. We are happy to host the first meeting or two.

Yours,
Brian, Sarah, Leo, and Jane
sarahanear@gmail.com

Mind-Body Skills Workshop

Dr. Tina Lightner-Morris will offer workshops on holistic health using research based healing therapies for 8 Mondays from November 14, 2016 to January 9, 2017 between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. to help you deal with life changes, stress and illness. Participants have experienced a decrease in depression and anxiety, renewed sense of wellbeing, better coping skills to manage pain, increased energy and stamina, enhanced immune system, greater self-awareness and more. The fee is \$65 per session, \$520 for the series or \$500 if paid in full by the first session.

For more information or if you have question, contact Dr. Lightner-Morris, at 301.524.0808 or tina@lightbalncecounseling.org

The King's Birthday

It is time again to plan for the Epiphany Pageant. We will present "The King's Birthday," on Sunday January 8th at 5pm. There are parts for all of our young people from A Godly Play, A Joyful Path and up. There are 8 speaking parts and some non speaking parts. We will all join in the singing and be in costumes. If you are interested in a part or just helping out, sign up sheet on the door of Rm 11 (the Joyful Path classroom downstairs) or see Gordon Donnelly after the 9:00 or 11:15 service. I can also be contacted by email- vagordon1@yahoo.com I am looking forward to making this a great activity for all.

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Lady of Guadalupe Day

Join us on December 10 to celebrate the Lady of Guadalupe Day at 7:00 p.m. in the Main Church. After the service we will have a Mariachi Band to sing "Las Mañanitas" to the Virgin. If you want to experience more about the Latino Traditions, this would be a great opportunity to do it. After the service we would continue the celebration in the Undercroft with more Mariachi songs and Latin-American food.

Christmas Flowers

If you would like to donate Christmas flowers, please use an envelope from the table outside the office and give it to a Welcome Team Member with your check. Suggested amount is \$25.

LIFE AT ASCENSION

Visitors' Welcome Kits Are Available

If you are visiting Ascension today, Welcome! To learn more about the community that is Church of the Ascension, please take home with you a welcome packet, located on the Chapel counter and on the table next to the Office. A Welcome Team member will be glad to assist you!

Worship Leaders' Roster

Sari will be starting the roster for January, February and March 2017 very soon. If you know of any dates when you won't be available, let her know by email (sari.stoddard@verizon.net) and she will make sure you aren't scheduled to serve on those dates. Please don't send her anything after the first week of December, though - she won't be able to make changes after that time.

Vestry Nominations Welcome



It is that time of year when the Vestry is in discernment around who may be called to the ministry of leadership at Ascension. If you'd like to nominate someone simply approach any Vestry member, or e-mail one of the Wardens: Betsy Hasegawa (grhasegawa@verizon.net) or Janet King (bkmechanical@aol.com).

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Last Week's Income*	Weekly Budget Goal	Year to Date Income*	Year to Date Budget Goal
\$14,238.58	\$9,498.19	\$460,887.02	\$446,415.04

N.B.—In addition to pledge and plate income, together with what Ascension receives in rental fees and money from several small trusts, Ascension uses the cash portion of the Endowment Fund to meet month-to-month operating expenses. In general, we have been using between \$7,000 - \$8,000 per month from the Endowment on top of a monthly transfer of \$3,334 that the Vestry approved as part of the 2016 budget.

Pledge Update as of 11-29-16:

- 99 Pledges for the Annual Giving Campaign, for a total of \$235,987
- 53 Pledges for Facilities Reserve Fund, for a total of \$73,672

Below are the names of those who pledged to the annual giving campaign this past week:

Kathleen Bainbridge, Ted & Kelly Bedell, Fayemi & Christina Johnson, Peggy Ruppel, Norman & Shirley Seidle

And those who pledged to the Facilities Fund:

Anne Brink and Gordon L Donnelly

CARING FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

Ascension's Giving Tree

This Advent season through Sunday, January 8, you will find Ascension's "Giving Tree" adorning the Narthex. A sign near the tree will identify crucially needed items for refugees and recent immigrants from the Middle East or Latin America, who are now living in the D.C. area. In a box near the tree, you will find a collection of pairs of color-coded cards, each labeled with possible gift options (gift card, metro card, or check). One card in each pair will have an attached string, and the box will contain several pairs of cards for each gift option. Select a pair representing the gift of your choice. Put the card containing a string on the tree immediately, and take the other card with you. After you have obtained your gift, place it in the designated box located near the tree. Your gift may also be placed in the offering plate as long as it is clearly marked "Giving Tree". Eventually, we hope the tree will be covered with many brightly colored cards. If you have any questions, feel free to contact fellow parishioners Sue and/or Richard Snay at 301.977.5259 or subarsy@aol.com.

Men's Shelter Lunch Program

The Men's Shelter Lunches program provides bagged lunches, 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 am service on the third Sunday of the month. We will put lunches together on **December 18** at 10:15 am. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help, or sign up at <http://bit.ly/1VAKEz8>.

Online Giving

Church of the Ascension is pleased to announce the introduction of an electronic option on our new website for making regular offerings. Contributions can now be debited automatically from your checking or saving account or processed using your credit or debit card. Our new electronic giving program offers convenience for you and much-needed donation consistency for the congregation. If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending the services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis.



An Authorization form and a "Frequently Asked Questions" flyer are available from the church office.

You can also find the electronic Authorization form by clicking "Give to the Church of Ascension" button on the home page of our new website.

CONTACT US

205 S. Summit Ave., Gaithersburg, Maryland, 20877
www.ascensionmd.org

- ◆ Office Hours: Monday-Friday 10:00 am-4:00 pm
- ◆ 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 García Ocampo
ocampo@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 16

Seminarian—Jason Cutshall
jascut@mac.com

Minister of Music—Jerrold Tidwell,
tidwellj@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 11

Parish Administrator - Kathy Van Arnum
office@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 10

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

Altar Guild Directors—Sari Stoddard, 301.972.0914,
Sari.stoddard@verizon.net, Mardia Dennis, 301.540.4499
mard908@gmail.com

Children's Music Leader - Howard Hanson,
howarddhanson@gmail.com

Chapel Musicians - Eric O'Loughlin, ericsmelody@gmail.com,
Samuel Munguia, pianoconclave@verizon.net

Nursery Attendant—Brenda Alvarez

LEADERSHIP AT ASCENSION

Senior Warden: Betsy Hasegawa

Junior Warden: Janet King

Vestry:

2017: Denise Lionetti, Najma Stubblefield, Paul Whitmore

2018: Berenice Rodriguez, Avin Lalmansingh,
Gary McLaughlin

2019: Rose Buck, Zadinga Ogada, John Pruessner
Sari Stoddard, *Clerk of the Vestry*
Howard Holland, *Treasurer*

Christian Formation for Children: Zadinga Ogada ~ Christian
Formation for Youth: Angie Hight-Walker ~ Facilities: Ted
Bedell Finance: Howard Holland ~ Mission: Paul Boynton ~
Pastoral 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. Nicholas' Parish, Darnestown
Diocesan Latino Ministry
Samaritan Ministry of Greater Washington

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5

- 1:00 pm Al-Anon—Library
- 6:30 pm Overeaters Anonymous—Room 4
- 7:00 pm Jr. Girl Scout Meeting—Room 6
- 7:00 pm Listening Hearts Community—Library

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6

- 6:00 pm Bible Study—Ascension House
- 7:00 pm Codependents Anonymous—Room 1
- 7:00 pm Stillwater Mindfulness Group—Chapel
- 8:30 pm Al-Anon—Room 1

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7

- 10:00 am Wednesday Morning Book Group—Library
- 1:00 pm Al-Anon—Library
- 7:00 pm Ensemble Rehearsal—Main Church
- 7:00 pm Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1
- 8:00 pm Gamblers' Anonymous—Chapel

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8

- 10:00 am Yoga—Chapel
- 4:00 pm Tai Chi—Chapel
- 7:45 pm Choir Rehearsal—Choir Room
- 6:30 pm Spanish Class —Ascension House

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9

- 1:00 pm Al-Anon—Library

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10

- 9:00 am Overeaters Anonymous—Chapel
- 11:00 am Al-Anon—Undercroft Commons
- 11:00 am Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

Preacher: Jason Cutshall

- 7:45 am Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 8:15 am Choir Rehearsal—Choir Room
- 9:00 am Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 9:00 am and 11:00 am Godly Play—Room 6
- 9:00 am and 11:00 am Joyful Path—Room 11
- 10:15 am Service for Families with Young Children—Chapel
- 11:00 am Misa en Espanol—Chapel
- 11:15 am Holy Eucharist—Main Church
- 11:15 am Family with Young Children Cell Group—Library
- 1:00 pm Pastoral Care Team Meeting—Library
- 5:00 pm Holy Eucharist—Chapel
- 6:00 pm Youth Group Meeting & Spiritual Formation—
Undercroft Commons

Church Attendance	Nov. 13	Nov. 20	Nov. 27
7:45 a.m.	25	31	28
9:00 a.m.	97	80	88
10:15 a.m.	20	17	13
11:00 a.m. Spanish Service	53	46	32
11:15 am	34	52	44
11:30 a.m. At Sunrise	8	15	13
5:00 p.m.	19	17	26
Total:	256	258	244