

WELCOME TO CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany: 19 February A.D. 2017

The Brain Power of Prayer

I have a thing for brain science. I told one of my coworkers about this fascination, and she replied, "That's not very exciting." I didn't miss a beat, "Do you know what happens when you get excited?" She frowned and said, "No."

"BRAIN SCIENCE!" See, brain science is the very definition of fun.

We've entered a new era in neuroscience because we now have ways to image the insides of brains while they work. The precision of these scans is admittedly low-there are thousands of brain cells in each pixel of our scans. Even this limited insight is illuminating.

As a person who loves science and spirituality, neuroscience is even more fascinating. The ways people encounter God happens in the brain, and the effects spiritual practices have on us can be studied. Contrary to some popular notions, faith seems to be very good for us.

Most of us get stressed out about our daily lives. We worry, and dwell on our anxieties. We over think things, and get caught in mental ruts. Sometimes, we even feel guilty about how we live our lives, but can't summon the will power to do anything different. All these thoughts stir up the most ancient part of our brains, called the limbic system.

Our limbic systems are great survivalists, and work faster than other parts of the brain. Unfortunately, the limbic system powers fear, anger, and aggression. Rational thinking and creativity come from other parts of our brains. How can we get those parts of the brain to be more active in our daily living?

Prayer and meditation.

No seriously, that's what brain scientists say. Prayer and meditation cause increased activity in the parts of your brain responsible for focus, concentration, empathy, and compassion. Prayer is a remarkable way to escape the kind of negative thoughts that consume us and drag us down. Studies show that people who pray or meditate often change their brains in positive ways.

This prayer speaks of God's greatness, "his" love, and his forgiveness. It speaks of our thankfulness and forgiveness toward others. Finally, this prayer focuses on a goal of better living. All these things are recommended by neurologists who specialize in spirituality as ways to change our behaviors and feelings.

Jesus and neuroscience both tell us the same recipe for prayer.

- Focus on God's love and goodness.
- Be thankful.
- Forgive others easily.
- Focus on goals for better living.

Do this everyday, and your brain will change for the better. So will your thoughts, feelings, and actions. Pray without ceasing, indeed.

- "Science Mike" McHargue

Candidates Forum on Sunday, March 5

The Vestry candidates will be available for dialog on Sunday, March 5 after the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00/11:15 a.m. services in the Undercroft Commons.

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

Godly Play

Today, Parable of the Great Pearl: We will study the Parable of the Great Pearl from the Gospel of Matthew(13:45). In this Parable Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a merchant who goes in search of the Great Pearl, and exchanges everything for the Great Pearl when it is found. The children and teachers will explore questions about the parable after hearing the story.

A Joyful Path

The Members of a Joyful Path will be studying how we are a part of the community of life that includes all people. Lesson topics will be: What is family?; People in the Neighborhood; The New Tribe and No Boundaries. Please come and join us downstairs in Room 11 during the 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. services

Yoga Classes

New Yoga Time: Randy will be part of an interfaith team teaching comparative religion at Osher for Lifelong Learning at Johns Hopkins University starting next Thursday morning, so yoga will move to Tuesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. in the Chapel starting next Tuesday, February 21.

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.

New Book for Wednesday Morning

Starting at the usual time (10:00 a.m.) on February 1 (in the Library), the Wednesday morning book discussion group will begin to talk about Krista Tippett's *Becoming Wise: An Inquiry into the Mystery and Art of Living*. From the author: "The discourse of our common life inclines towards despair. In my field of journalism, where we presume to write the first draft of history, we summon our deepest critical capacities for investigating what is inadequate, corrupt, catastrophic, and failing. The 'news' is defined as the extraordinary events of the day, but it is most often translated as the extraordinarily terrible events of the day. And in an immersive 24/7 news cycle, we internalize the deluge of bad news as the norm—the real truth of who we are and what we're up against as a species. But my work has shown me that spiritual geniuses of the everyday are everywhere. They are in the margins and do not have publicists. They are below the radar, which is broken." Read through page 79 for February 22.

LIFE LONG LEARNING

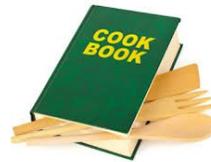
The Listening Heart Community

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

- NEW - February 19: Northern Montgomery County Regional Youth Consortium Laser Tag at Shadowland in Gaithersburg. Cost is \$13.50 and the first game starts at 5:00 p.m. Let Angie know if you are going.
- February 26 - Regular Meeting in Undercroft Commons
- March 12 - Regular Meeting in Undercroft Commons
- NEW - March 19: Northern Montgomery County Regional Youth Consortium at Ascension-making blessing baggies
- March 26 - Regular Meeting in Undercroft Commons
- April 9 - No Youth Group due to Spring Break
- April 23 - Regular Meeting in Undercroft Commons
- April 30 - Youth Sunday: NO YOUTH GROUP BUT LOTS OF CHURCH TIME
- May 21 - Picnic at Hight Walkers'

Ascension 2017 Cookbook



We are very excited to be in the creative process of producing the church of the Ascension Community Cookbook! We know Our members (and their family and friends) are blazing good cooks! This is the time to share some delicious recipes, and give credit to those Mothers and Fathers, and Aunties who gave us the recipe in the first place.

We are gathering the recipes right now, and would love to have you take a moment to give us those wonderful directions on paper (forms in the Narthex) or electronically from the website: <http://ascensionmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Recipe-Card-English.pdf> Please complete your submission by March 5. And, in case you have not heard, the Ladies Cookbook Committee will pump up your enthusiasm for our cookbook endeavor in a unique way! They will be making some of their own yummy appetizers for us all to try at the Pancake Supper, February 28. Definitely put THAT on the Calendar.

If you have any question about the content or process, please contact Zadinga @Z_Zulu@msn.com

Sunday Morning Cell Group for Cell Group Leaders

If you are interested in growing your faith and connecting with other Ascensionites, then join me for a cell groups leader training. Cell groups are a great way to develop your faith in the context of relationship. We will talk about how to form, participate and facilitate a small group. We will address best practices and a structure to start your group off with. Join me Sunday after the 9:00 or 11:15 services in Library, starting Sunday, March 5. Blessings, Jason Cutshall, jascut@me.com

Cell Group for Families with Young Children

The cell group for families with young children meets the first Sunday of every month at 11:15 am 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 sarahannear@gmail.com

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

This fun annual event will be held on Tuesday, February 28, 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 -even a gluten free option are included on the traditional menu...there will be something for everyone. Also, if you plan to submit a recipe to the Ascension cookbook feel free to bring a sample of your dish to share.

Cost (s); \$5.00 per adult; \$3.00 per children 4 to 10 years; and children under 4 are free. We DO take debit and credit cards. If you have an instrument you would like to play, contact Randy at ral@ascensionmd.org. This fun event needs lots of helpers AND lots of attendees, 'the more, the merrier!' Sign up here: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0A4CABA82DA75-shrove1>

Annual Meeting

Our annual parish meeting will take place at 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 12 in the Undercroft Commons. We'll begin with a potluck lunch. Our primary business will be to elect new Vestry members and to have a time for shared reflection on the ministry and mission of Ascension. The Vestry candidates will be available for dialog on the preceding Sunday after the 9:00 a.m. and 11:00/11:15 a.m. services in the Undercroft Commons.

Call for Confirmation

If you are in the 9th grade or older (including adults up to 99 years old) and want to confirm your baptismal vows at the Cathedral in May, drop Randy a line. You should have been an active participant in the life of Ascension for at least the last couple of years, and be willing to participate in a group made up of people who are deciding if this the right time to do this.

Wednesday Nights in Lent

Wednesday evening yoga is back. Meet Randy in the Chapel at 6:00 p.m. for half an hour of gentle yoga. There are plenty of extra mats and blocks for those who need them.

Then there will be 20 minutes of Centering Prayer (instruction provided for those new to the practice). Then at 7:00 p.m. follow Randy to the Library for a 5 session class on how to read the Bible called *Who Says So?*

From the Introduction: This adult education curriculum is designed to lead participants into an encounter with scripture as a source of authority for the Church and in their own lives. Its purpose is:

- To overcome common fears of discussing scriptural authority shared by many Episcopalians
- To give participants an awareness of the existence, strengths and limitations of a diversity of positions in relation to the authority of scripture, together with tools to understand the ways in which scriptural authority can be invoked by different groups
- To give participants an understanding of changing views of scriptural authority throughout history, including the uniquely Anglican perspective
- To enable participants to experience a diversity of methods of exploring and interpreting the scriptures
- To encourage participants to reflect upon the authoritative claims that they allow scripture to make on their own lives

Lenten formation starts on March 8.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is March 1. 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 evening service will be bilingual. 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 morning commuters at the Shady Grove Metro Station.

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.

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 **today** at 10:15 am. Contact Edith at esekasi@gmail.com if you would like to help, or sign up at <http://bit.ly/1VAKEz8>.

Mobile Med

The MobileMed clinic will move to the Rockville site during the months of January and February due to the van being too cold and uncomfortable for patients, providers, volunteers and staff. The Rockville site address: 981 Rollins Ave, Rockville, MD 20852

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

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Annual Giving Campaign Extension

The Annual Giving Campaign has been extended to help us reach our 2017 funding goal of \$500,000. Please help us send a clear message that we are a community that lives generously and supports Ascension's mission and outreach. Many of you have already pledged, and we thank you for your generosity. In the coming weeks, the Vestry will be calling members who have not yet turned in a pledge form to ask that they do so as soon as possible. Thank you in advance for your support. **Envelopes for annual giving pledges and the Facilities Reserve Fund are now available on the table outside the Church Office.**

Pledge Update as of 2-14-17:

- 157 Pledges for the Annual Giving Campaign, for a total of \$357, 503
- 64 Pledges for Facilities Reserve Fund, for a total of \$87,412

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

- Aaron, Emma and Kaifa Boyce
- Margaret Mirin

CONTACT US

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

- ◆ 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 García Ocampo
ocampo@ascensionmd.org, voice mailbox 16

Seminarian—Jason Cutshall
jascut@mac.com

Minister of Music—Jerold 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

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

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

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

Nursery Attendant—Brenda Alvarez,
brendaalvarezduque@hotmail.com

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: 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
Diocesan Retreat Committee
Pray for all the Presidents of the United States

THIS WEEK AT ASCENSION

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20

OFFICE CLOSED

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

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

10:00 Yoga—Chapel
11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
6:00 p.m. 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, FEBRUARY 22

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, FEBRUARY 23

11:00 a.m. Episcopal Seeking Seniors—Asbury
4:00 p.m. Tai Chi—Chapel
8:00 p.m. Bariatric Support Group—Chapel

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24

1:00 p.m. Al-Anon—Library

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

6:00 a.m. Ministeria Felicidad
9:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Chapel
11:00 a.m. Al-Anon—Undercroft Commons
11:00 a.m. Overeaters Anonymous—Room 1
4:30 p.m. Cookbook Group Meeting- Room 1

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26

Preacher: Randy Lord-Wilkinson
7:45 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
8:15 a.m. Choir Rehearsal—Choir Room
9:00 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Godly Play—Room 6
9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Joyful Path—Room 11
10:15 a.m. Service for Families with YC— Chapel
10:15 a.m. Men's Shelter Lunches
11:00 a.m. Misa en Espanol—Chapel
11:15 a.m. Holy Eucharist—Main Church
1:30 p.m. Vestry Meeting—Room 1
5:00 p.m. Holy Eucharist—Chapel
6:00 p.m. Youth Group Meeting & Spiritual Formation—
Undercroft Commons

Church Attendance	Jan. 29	Feb. 5	Feb. 12
7:45 a.m.	22	25	23
9:00 a.m.	93	123	87
10:15 a.m.	16	12	10
11:00 a.m. Spanish Service	58	50	38
11:15 am	66	50	45
11:30 a.m. At Sunrise	—	—	9
5:00 p.m.	16	14	21
Total:	271	274	233